

THE
ROMANCE OF HISTORY.

~~~~~  
ITALY





*Nawab Salar Jung Bahadur*  
THE "CHANDOS CLASSICS."  

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*Library.*

THE  
ROMANCE OF HISTORY.

ITALY.

BY

C. MACFARLANE.

*With Illustrations by T. Landseer.*



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## P R E F A C E.

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# PREFACE

TO

## THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

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**I**N Italy, the scene of the following Tales, it has been my fortune to pass many years of my life, and I have endeavoured to avail myself of the local knowledge I possess.

Some few of the Tales were written at Naples, in the scenes of the events ; and, *generally*, I have taken my descriptions from notes made during my travels, seldom attempting to describe what I have not seen, or indeed what was not familiar to me from long residences or repeated visits. A little enthusiasm will probably be excused in one, who, considering the present length of his life, has passed a good portion of it in that beautiful country with little else to do but to see and to admire.

The slightest glance at the complicated History of Italy will make the reader aware of the difficulties of the undertaking : one of them was the difficulty of selection ; for her annals are so rich in romantic incidents, that there is scarcely one of the numerous little states into which the Peninsula has been divided but would furnish materials for a work more voluminous than the present.

I have dwelt long on the darker years of the middle ages, thinking them more peculiarly within the province of Romantic Annals, and have given (proportionately) more Tales to the South of Italy than to the North, because the history and scenery of the Kingdom of Naples are, in my opinion, still more romantic than those of Upper Italy.

C. M. F.

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## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Sixth Century.

568.—THE Lombard Epoch comprises a space of two hundred and six years, and the reigns of twenty-two sovereigns. The Goths, their precursors, had a much shorter reign, but a wider dominion while it lasted ; for at no time did the Lombards occupy more than two-thirds of Italy, and portions even of those two-thirds, as the Great Duchies of Benevento and Spoleto, though governed by their countrymen, were almost always independent of the kings of Lombardy, whose fall they long survived. The rest of the Italian territory, consisting of the maritime parts of Magna Grecia, or the Calabrias, of Naples and the Marches, was still held by the Greek Empire, whose Governor, or Exarch, resided at Ravenna. At the commencement of this period, when the bishops of Rome acknowledged a subordination to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and when their temporal ambition had no opportunity to expand, a small belt of land round Rome was the patrimony of Saint Peter's ; but in the latter years of the Lombards that patrimony was vastly augmented by the interference of the Franks, and the States of the Church were of such extent as to merit notice in the great divisions of Italy, which indeed, it might then be said, was occupied by the Lombards, the Greeks, and the Pope.\*

It would be difficult to determine which of these divisions most abounded in misery, horror, and crime, during these dark ages ; but the Royal Lombard one stands foremost in the pages of the chroniclers, and offers several incidents which may claim the character of romantic history.

The dates of the influential events in the Italian peninsula during the Lombard epoch are these :—

In 568 Alboin, the King of the Lombards, having conquered the Gepidi, crossed the Alps, not merely with an army, but with his whole people and his allies, with their wives and children and aged parents. He took Vicenza, Verona, and other cities, and advanced at once to the immediate neighbourhood of Rome and Ravenna, where the fears of the Pope in one, and of the Greek Exarch in the other, were extreme.

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\* I have scarcely thought it necessary to include the Venetians, for up to this date their territory consisted of the barren islands at the end of the Adriatic, and a few strips of land on terra-firma on its shores.



569.—The Lombards advanced into Tuscany, took Spoleto, and almost all the province of Umbria, with a few towns in the district now called the *Marches*, or the *Marca d' Ancona*.

570.—In this year they seem to have conquered Benevento, with a great portion of what is now the kingdom of Naples, and to have founded the vast and enduring duchy of Benevento, creating Zotto, or Zottone, its first duke.

572.—Towards the end of this year, Ticinum, or Pavia, which had held out three years and several months, surrendered to the Lombards, and Alboin might thence pretend to the title of King of Italy. The fact, reported by all the historians of the time, is consistent and characteristic. "In attempting to enter, after the surrender of the city, by the eastern, or the gate of St. John, Alboin's war-horse fell beneath him, nor would rise again, though spurred by the King and whipped by his attendants. Then one of his officers, a person with the fear of God before his eyes, said, 'Ah! my Lord, recollect the oath you have sworn. Retract it, and you will enter the city. This poor people is a Christian people.' The oath taken by Alboin in his rage was to put to the edge of the sword all the inhabitants of Pavia, for having so long resisted his arms. He retracted it, well knowing he was not bound to its fulfilment; and then his horse starting at once to his feet, the King entered the city, without harming any one, and went and took up his abode in the palace built by Theodoric, the Gothic king."

573.—The reign of the conqueror was short; for in this year he was murdered by Elmigiso and Perideo, two Lombards gained over by his wife Rosmunda, whose hate and revenge he had excited by forcing her, at a public banquet at Verona, to drink wine out of the skull of her own father, the King of the Gepidi, whom he had slain in battle. In the month of August of the same year, the chiefs of the nation assembled and elected the most noble among their body for their king. His name was Clefo, or Clefone, and that, except a mention made by Paul Warnefrid of his cruelty, is all we know of him. The same Paul Warnefrid, or, as he is more generally called, Paulus Diaconus, a member, and the historian of their nation, informs us, that in the function of creating the kings of Lombardy, a lance was presented to the new king. He mentions neither crown nor diadem; yet crowns must have been used at a period not far removed from that of their first entrance into Italy, for we find three of them (one of which the famous iron crown that Bonaparte affected) deposited in the cathedral of Monza as early as the year 602.

575.—Clefo, or Clefone, died, and his death was followed by an interregnum of ten years, during which, according to Paul Warnefrid, the Lombard nation was governed by thirty-six dukes, forming together a federative republic.

584.—The Lombards elected Authar, or Autharis, for their king, and the thirty-six dukes agreed to contribute one-half of their respective revenues towards his support.

587.—Wars between Childebert, King of the Franks, and the Lombard King Authar, to the advantage of the latter. Authar, died 590.

591.—Agilolf, or Agilulph, Duke of Turin, the husband of Theodelinda, widow of the late King and a relative of Authar, was elevated to the throne. As a good catholic, Theodelinda would have preferred an orthodox husband, but none such was to be found among the Lombard princes, and she had already lived happily with an Arian. A peace was concluded with Childebert, and the Lombards were no more molested by the Franks. This allowed them to defy the power of the Greek Emperors. Some time after, the King renounced his heresy.

593.—Agilolf, or Agilulph, recovered the city of Perugia, which had been taken from him by the Greeks. After other successes, he besieged Rome, but the spirit of Gregory the Great presided there, and the Lombards were foiled.

604.—Gregory the Great expired.

611.—The Friuli, and a considerable portion of Italy, were dreadfully ravaged by an irruption of the Avari, who carried away a vast number of Italians and Lombards into Hungary.

615.—Agilulph died, after a prosperous reign, and was succeeded by his son Adaloald, a minor, who remained under the tutelage of his mother, Theodelinda. This same year was fatal to Italy by the rapid spread of the leprosy, a malady rare, or unknown before, in that country.

625.—Queen Theodelinda ceased to live; and Adaloald, released from her counsels, conducted himself so ill, that he was driven from the throne as one mad. The Lombards then considered the right or the descent of Gundenberga, Theodelinda's daughter and Arioald her husband was chosen king. Arioald was an Arian, but Gundenberga had been educated in the orthodox faith by her mother, Theodelinda.





### The Festival of Monza.

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Siedon le Muse su le tombe, e quando  
 Il tempo con sue fredde ali vi spazza  
 I marmi e l' ossa, quelle Dee fan lieti  
 Di lor canto i deserti, e l' armonia  
 Vince di mille e mille anni il silenzio.

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SOMEWHAT more than half a century had elapsed since the time that the conqueror Alboin had looked over Italy from the Julian Alps,\* and, descending thence, had advanced unop-

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\* "Giunto Alboino con quel gran seguito ai confini dell' Italia, salì sopra un alto monte di quei luoghi per vagheggiare fin dove potea il bel paese, ch' egli già contava per suo."—Muratori, Annal. ann. 568.

posed—a triumphant march rather than a warlike campaign—to the gates of Ravenna and Rome, seizing and securing the most extensive and the fairest regions of the peninsula as a “lasting patrimony of the Lombards.”\* These conquerors from Pannonia, who perhaps on their first irruption were not all so barbarous as they have been described, had certainly been improved during that period. Uninterrupted success, a security of possession that did not seem likely to be disturbed either by the effeminate Greeks or Thracians of Constantinople, or the warlike nations beyond the Alps, had lulled to rest anxious vigilance and suspicion, which keep the arms in the hands of foreign conquerors, and but too often turn them on the slightest pretext or provocation against the conquered—thus perpetuating the ferocity of war when war is over. Degraded too and barbarized as might be the wasted population of Italy, whom it is a satire to call Romans, they still must have been in possession of a degree of civilization, the relic of their former refinement and greatness; and the conquerors would contract a portion of this, even while they infected the conquered with their own rudeness. Nor could the mild Ausonian clime, which in sixty years had so changed the character and habits of the Goths, who had preceded them in the occupation of Italy, have been void of effects on the fiery Lombards. Indeed, the chronicles of the time, scanty and imperfect, and frequently prejudiced as they are, bear testimony to the fact of a progressive improvement in the arts and amenities of life; and, though infinitely remote from the condition of a civilized people, the Lombards, at the period of our tale, which is derived from cotemporary annals, were perhaps almost equally distant from that savage state of barbarism over which neither history nor romance has a charm to throw.

Ariold was the sixth of the Lombard kings that reigned in Italy, and he kept his court at Pavia, which had been selected by Alboin, the first conqueror, as the capital of the kingdom. Gundenberga, who shared his heart and throne, was celebrated for the beauty of her person and the qualities of her mind; and the grateful Lombards praised in their Queen a benignity that extended to all that

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\* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xlv.

approached her on earth, and a piety that must prepare for her a place in Heaven. Her alms to the poor were frequent and liberal ; she attended in person to soothe those sorrows over which nor money, nor food, nor raiment could have any influence : the wounded in spirit blessed her, and the benevolence of her heart which shone in all her actions, captivated the universal love of her subjects. The charms which might awaken love, and the virtues which could secure it, ought all to have been increased in the breast of King Arioald, by the circumstance that it was at least as much to his wife Gundenberga, the sister of a deposed monarch, and the daughter of a sainted queen, Theodelinda,\* whose memory the Lombards held in peculiar veneration, as to any qualities of his own, that he owed the crown of Lombardy, and kept it in peace on his head, in spite of the threats of the Greek Exarch of Ravenna, and the persistency of the Roman Pontiff in considering him a usurper and tyrant. Indeed, the debt of gratitude and affection may have been duly discharged, and Arioald have lived in happiness with his gifted wife ; for the recorders of those remote events give no intimation of disunion or discord, until they register with indignant terms the plots and success of a traitor.

Pavia was the seat of government, and the habitual residence of the Lombard princes ; but the beautiful hill of Monza, on account of the purity of the air, was frequently, during the summer, the retreat of royalty and the Court. This spot had been selected by Theodoric the Goth as his residence, and a considerable town had grown up under the shadow of that King's peaceful retreat ; but it was to the Lombard Queen Theodelinda, already mentioned, that Monza was most indebted. This devout lady, having conceived a particular affection for the place, caused a splendid cathedral church to be erected there, and by dedicating it to Saint John the Baptist, the protecting saint of the Lombards, and by enriching it

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\* The impertinent Messer Giovanni Boccaccio (Gio. iii. Novel 2.) has made the pious Queen Theodelinda the heroine of a very degrading, naughty love story, for which he has been justly reprehended by Giannone (*Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli*, tom. i. p. 263), and with still more severity by Muratori, *Annali*.

with an infinitude of relics of peculiar sanctity, she rendered Monza a sort of holy city for the nation.\* Simultaneously with the church, or probably, to judge from the very religious character of the Queen, not until the church was finished, a royal palace was built at Monza ; and we have proof of a certain feeling for the fine arts in Theodelinda, and the existence somewhere, though whether among the Lombards or the conquered Italian subjects is not explained, of a certain proficiency and execution, in the fact that at her orders the walls of that palace were covered with paintings representing the exploits of the Lombard conquerors.†

The charms of a cool, salubrious atmosphere, of the picturesque beauties of the site, of verdant hill and fruitful valley, of blue mountain and gushing crystal stream, were enhanced by filial reverence and affection ; the mortal remains of Theodelinda reposed in a marble sarcophagus in the temple she had built ; and at Monza Gundenberga could pray, or shed healing and purifying tears over the tomb of her mother. It was therefore natural that she should frequently remain there even in the absence of her husband, whom the business of the state might detain at Pavia, or call to some distant part of the kingdom.

A lovely morning—a morning in June, and under an Italian sky, announced the festival of Saint John the Baptist, which was held that year with peculiar pomp at Monza. Long before the break of day, Pavia and Milan poured out their stream of devotees, which were swelled in their progress towards Monza by tributary currents from the contiguous towns and villages in the rich Lombard plain ; and at an hour that was still an early one, the lovely Queen Gundenberga, with a heart that sympathised in the general joy, and glowed with gratitude to Heaven, watched the approach of her subjects from a turret of the palace. The Lombard chiefs rode proudly up the hill, mounted on spirited coursers of the ancient breed of the rich meadows of Venetia, which they had

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\* Paul Warn.

† Id. lib. 4, cap. 23, or Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 603.

restored and improved ;\* the hawk, whose docility and efficacy in the sports of the field they had first made known to the Roman provinces, was the companion of nearly every warrior, for their customs had established, and even their Italian laws had recognised, "the sword and the hawk of equal dignity and importance in the hands of a noble Lombard."† Each chieftain was followed by a certain number of adherents, who did not move in the precise subordination of the feudal system, which was unknown to the Lombard conquerors, but were either personal servants or voluntarily appeared in the train of the heads of their respective families, or of those to whom they were bound by affection or obligation. These followers bore lances in their hands, retaining in a pageantry the arms with which they had vanquished their enemies—their favourite arms, the symbol of royalty among them. The inferior order of Lombards approached, some on horseback and some on foot ; but the meanest of them, even in this time of peace, wore a trusty broad-sword girt to his side, to distinguish him as a member of the conquering nation. Yet this distinction was scarcely needed ; for the Italian subjects, with that relish for festivity and church pageantry which seems always to have been in them, and who now flocked to Monza and the church of Saint John, probably without much thought of whether the ceremonies there would be performed according to the strict Catholic formula, or tinged with the Arian heresy professed by the mass of their masters, were sufficiently recognisable by their greater personal beauty and their less bold demeanour ; by their costume, which the conquerors had only partially imitated ; and by their proceeding in separate bands, studiously apart from the Lombards, who probably desired not their society, and who certainly never were amal-

\* The studs of Dionysius of Syracuse, and his frequent victories in the Olympic Games, had diffused among the Greeks the fame of the Venetian horses ; but the breed was extinct in the time of Strabo. Gisulf (the first Duke of Friuli) obtained from his uncle, Alboin (the first Lombard conqueror) *generosarum equarum greges*. Paul. Diac. l. 11 c. 9. The Lombards afterwards introduced *caballi sylvatici*, wild horses. Paul. l. iv. c. 11. Gibbon, chap. xlv note 43.

† Gibbon, chap. xlv.

gamated, as some writers have supposed they were, with the Italian population. Mixed up with the crowds on foot, or toiling slowly after them, were seen long, low cars, containing the wives and children of the Lombards. These cars were drawn by robust and wild-looking oxen, of a foreign and peculiar breed, also introduced into Italy by the conquerors;\* and as they were goaded on the rough road by the spears of the drivers, the stamping of their hoofs, the brandishing of their horns, and tremendous bellowings, showed their impatience of the yoke.

This interminable line of procession defiled beneath the turret where the Queen was stationed; and as the bands of devotees successively came in sight of the holy Basilica they rent the air with barbarous shouts to the glory of the saint, with a concluding diapason in honour of Arioald their King, and their Queen Gundenberg. The praise of the latter was general, and as sincere as ever proceeded from human lips; and when at a late hour she proceeded with her husband and Court from the palace to the church, and heard the name of the Queen, the beautiful, the good, the charitable, blessed by the high and the lowly, by Italians and by Lombards with equal warmth, tears of pleasure stood in her large blue eyes, and in amiable weakness, in feminine tremor, she clung to the arm of her warrior husband for support.

If the Lombard sovereigns were thorns in the sides of the ambitious popes, they were liberal in excess to their clergy; and bishops, and priests, and every order of monks as yet extant, owned their liberality, and increased and multiplied under their dominion. The Vatican itself could hardly have offered a more splendid hierarchical display than that which met the eye, when the doors of the temple were thrown open, and the shrine of Saint John, decorated with gold and silver and precious stones, and flanked by two long lines of monks with shaven crowns and robes picturesquely simple, and of priests in costly stoles, was open to the thronging worshippers. The incense breathed as sweetly, the tapers and the

\* Paul. Diac, l. iv. c. II. He calls these animals *bubali*, which some have rendered buffaloes, though it seems more probable that he meant the aurochs, or wild bulls, of ancient Germany.



torches of virgin wax, shed as brilliant a light as if the successor of St. Peter himself had presided at the festival. Moreover, the Lombards had adopted in their churches the inestimable gift of dignity and beauty which Saint Gregory had bestowed on the ecclesiastical service in his sublime "*Canto fermo*;" and whatever may have been the degree of spiritual unction, the Mass and the hymns to the saint were just as well sung at Monza as they could have been at Rome. In ancient days, as in modern, under the Christian creed as under the Pagan, it seems to have been the practice, more particularly in the glowing, exhilarating climes of Italy and Greece, to mix festivity and diversion with worship and prayer, and that the spiritual exercises of the morning should be followed by the recreations of the body, and by feasting and dancing, singing and drinking. Even as we now see it in the "*Giorni di festa*" at Rome or Naples, did it befall at Monza; for, as soon as the splendid ceremonies of the church were over, the scene without assumed all the characters of a country fair and a scene of general rejoicing. Nor was it an unpleasant sight to see the collected thousands scattered on the verdant hills, or laid under the shade of trees, or by the gushing fountains whose cool waves might mitigate the force of the wines of Lombardy and Piedmont; nor was it at all ungrateful to the ear to catch the distant roar of mingled voices speaking various tongues, and the long, loud laugh and the festive chorus, and the sounds of such musical instruments as barbarians and Italians could collect and play. Such were the disportments of the people. The chieftains, and warriors, and courtiers of Lombardy were entertained as befitted their rank in the palace of their King, and when their obeisance had been made in the chamber of audience, the festive tables were spread in the banqueting hall, where the Queen, Gundenberga, in her beauty and amiability, presided with her husband. These Lombards were all in their most courtly and gayest attire, yet their personal appearance and equipments were not precisely such as might charm the eye of modern maidens.

The back part of their heads was shaved, and in front their thick, matted hair, divided over the forehead, fell down on each

side of the face as low as the line of the mouth, over which, as well as across the eyes, motion or the wind would frequently throw it, and shaggy beards of enormous length, from which they are supposed to have derived their name of Longobardi, completed their hirsute appearance. Their dress consisted of loose linen garments, much after the fashion of our Anglo-Saxons, and they were rather gaudily than tastefully ornamented with broad stripes of variegated colours—red, yellow, purple, blue, and green—sewn on transversely. In Italy they had found silks, and silks worked by Eastern looms, and dyed with the brilliant dyes of the East, which added considerably to the splendour of their appearance.

Their legs were encased in long hose which reached to the ankle, and they wore open sandals on their otherwise naked feet; but, many of the courtiers had adopted from the Italians the use of *stivaletti*, or long gaiters made of woollen cloth of a bright red or scarlet colour.\* The *Gasindj*,† or domestic and military attendants, had placed against the wall, behind each chieftain, his *asta*, or lance; and, even at the festive board of their sovereign, their heavy swords were heard to rattle, and their iron baskets and their hilts were seen at times to protrude above the level of the table. Yet this ungente exterior hid many a gentle heart; and at the period we are describing, the epitaph of the Lombard Droctulf‡ might indeed have been applied to many of his countrymen—

“Terribilis visu facies, sed corde benignus,  
Longaque robusto pectore barba fuit.”

As the warriors thus sat carousing at Monza, and drinking healths “nine fathoms deep”—for Lombards were strong-headed

\* Paul. Diac. Muratori, Annali, ann. 603.

† “Nei costumi Germanici il dependere personalmente dai principali era, già ai tempi di Tacito, una distinzione ambita. Questa dipendenza, nel medio evo, comprendeva il servizio domestico e il militare; ed era un misto di soggezione onorata, e di devozione affettuosa. Quelli che esercitavano questa condizione erano dai Longobardi chiamati *Gasindj*.” Il Conte Manzoni. Notizie Storiche sopra i Longobardi.

‡ Paul. de Gest. Longobardi. l. iii. c. 19. Or see 49th note to 45th chap. of Gibbon.

fellows, not particularly distinguished by sobriety, (though, by this time, they had made an improvement "in their cups," and no longer pledged each other in the skulls of their enemies,\*) Queen Gundenberga's attention was arrested, and finally her surprise and uneasiness excited, by the extraordinary behaviour of one who sat near her at table. The warrior who occasioned this emotion in the bosom of the virtuous Queen was none other than Adalolf, the friend and confidant of her husband, a man the King delighted to honour, and whom he preferred to all others. At the beginning of the repast, as the eyes of Gundenberga were kindly directed to those at her end of the table, to see that they were properly served, they met the glances of this Adalolf, who smiled on her with surpassing sweetness. The Queen, never avaricious of her smiles, returned those of her husband's favourite with her wonted benignity. As the repast continued, Gundenberga's eyes happening again to wander in that direction, she caught Adalolf's fixed ardently on her face; and when the courtier saw she observed him, he cast a complacent glance on the costly new robe he had put on in honour of John the Baptist. "What can have come into the head of the repository of my Lord's wisdom and confidence?" thought the Queen; "but, I suppose, nothing but a little vanity: his robe is new, and really very becoming; and I see he has a new chain of gold round his neck; and, in truth, he is a proper-looking man." Other subjects and other persons speedily engaged the attention of the royal hostess, and Adalolf was not honoured with another glance or another thought, until the massy wine-cups had liberally circulated and the banquet approached its close; then she did look casually towards the seat of the favourite, and then it was she felt disturbed. The large blue eyes of Adalolf were riveted on her face, to which, though she knew it not, a deep blush mantled; and when her glance met his, full and intense, she could not withdraw her eyes, but was fixed there as if

\* The reader will remember how this barbarous practice cost Alboin his life. According to Paul Warnefrid, the skull of his wife's father, always on his sideboard, was set in gold.

by fascination. As thus she looked at him, the expression of the favourite's countenance varied in a strange, wild manner. What meant that quivering lip and that flash of the eye? She was conscious of nought but a saint's purity—yet would she not for the world that her husband should see such looks bent on his wife! She made a violent effort, withdrew her eyes from the basilisk glare of the traitor, (for a traitor indeed, though as yet she could not doubt it, she was to find Adalolf,) and entered into friendly discourse with a veteran chief with a venerable white beard, who sat by her side. Shortly after, the Queen arose, and, saluting the assembled nobles, retired. The favourite watched her departure, and in less than a quarter of an hour he also withdrew from the banqueting-hall, flushed with wine and confidence.

The source of the villain's behaviour was this: in retiring from before the Queen at the audience of that morning, he overheard her Majesty say gaily, and in the innocence of her heart—and in truth, for he was among the handsomest of the Lombard race—"Saint John to my aid, but this Adalolf has a tall figure and a fine manly face!"\* But on a base not half so broad as this can vanity and presumption raise its edifice; and in the breast of the favourite there was no principle and no gratitude to pervert indulgence at the cost of his generous master's peace and honour.

The Queen had retired to the pleasure-grounds behind the palace; her maidens had separated in search of the wild flowers that grew profusely round each verdant knoll, or perhaps to discuss more at their ease the good looks and the fine dresses of the courtiers, who were then almost as numerous at Monza as the butterflies that were flitting from those flowers; and she sat alone, pensive and happy, in a little bower enjoying the breeze of the evening, and the glorious spectacle of the sun setting behind the distant Apennines. Of a sudden she heard the sounds of approaching steps—of steps hasty and heavy, unlike the gentle

\* Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 629. His authority is Fredegarius. In *Chronicon*, cap. 51.

tread of maiden with flowing hair.\* Who could it be? Had the King so soon forsaken the conviviality of his faithful subjects? Was it her husband come to seek her? The next moment she saw Adalolf at her feet! Speechless, breathless, almost motionless, the Queen could only withdraw the hand he attempted to grasp, and make a sign that he should rise. The audacious villain grasped the royal robe, and would have laid his head upon the Queen's knees. At this she recovered herself. She could no longer doubt of his intentions; but, generous as virtuous, she would give him an opportunity of retrieving himself ere it was too late; and she flattered herself that her tone and manner might restore him to reason, and to the sense of her virtues and the duty he owed the King his master.

"Sir Adalolf," said she mildly, "what means this? What boon is it you demand that requires so lowly a posture? It is not on your knees you have been wont to ask grace either of your King or Queen, and I cannot listen to you thus—rise, Sir." The confident, unblushing recreant arose. "And what boon can I demand?" said he; "what grace have I to ask but the fair Gundenberga's love?" The Queen started from him, but still commanding herself coolly, said: "Young man, I would not work your ruin, audacious as you are! The wine you have drunk hath troubled your senses—you are mad, or how could such words escape your lips? But away, Sir, away! Keep this damning secret, as I will keep it, repent ye of your sins, and all may be well!" "No! beautiful Gundenberga," replied the infatuated Adalolf, "the words that escape me are those of reason and love. I am not drunk, nor mad, but I heard the happy words that fell from your lips this morning in the audience-chamber, and am here, in opportune hour and spot, to enjoy the bliss and passion they pointed at."

\* Among the Lombards the young women wore their hair long and loose, but it was cut off at their marriage. Maidens of a marriageable state were styled in law, figlie in capegli. "Si crede che fossero pure chiamate *intonse*, e che di quivi sia venuta la voce *Tosa*, tuttavia in uso presso alcuni volghi di Lombardia."—Manzoni.

The Queen scarcely remembered having uttered the words he alluded to ; but when the expression of her innocent, thoughtless admiration came to her mind, she was filled with scorn and indignation. "Fool ! egregious coxcomb ! even more fool than villain !" cried she, in tones, though low and rapid, so vehement and penetrating, that they ought to have made him tremble ; "can it be that a careless word bestowed on your worthless person has spirited you on to aspire to the love of your sovereign, and aim at the dishonour of your too bountiful master ? Can there be vanity sufficient in the whole world to blind and bewilder you to such a point !" The favourite was confounded, yet his vanity, which was indeed egregious, his reliance on his own observation, and perhaps the wine working within him, restored his treasonable audacity, and he replied : "Woman, as well as man, is disposed to love that which they admire ; and if you do not love me, what meant that blushing cheek, that fixed eye, those glances only cast on me, even now at table ! Yes ! I do not deceive myself ; they spoke of passion ! You loved me then, and the time that has elapsed since is too short to admit even of a lady's changing, and all this is only feminine coyness or caprice." "Now, by the manes of my chaste and blessed mother ! by the blood of a race whose women are virtuous as their men are brave !" exclaimed Gundenberga, turning with flashing eyes on the traitor, and spitting in his face,\* "for this you deserve to be hacked piecemeal by the hands of serfs and bondsmen ! Presumptuous, disloyal, arrogant slave ! Ay ! shrink and hide your felon head ! Full well you know the fate that would await you from a betrayed King, and a nation you have insulted in the person of their Queen, whose fame hath never known reproach ! Yes, tremble, miserable recreant ! were I to breathe a word of what has passed here, the hound whipped to death by the hunter's scourges, the worthless hawk crucified on the tree, would experience a mild fate compared to what would be

\* "*E gli sputò sul volto*" are the concise words of Muratori. Not a very pretty lady-like achievement ; yet many centuries after, Queen Elizabeth used to box her courtiers' ears.

yours. But hence! despicable wretch that you are; my religion teaches me mercy. I leave your punishment to your own conscience, and never, unless this outrage be repeated, shall your Queen accuse you."

Almost annihilated, and not daring to raise his head, or look towards offended majesty, Adalolf slunk away without uttering a word. The Queen sat awhile where she was, to recover her composure, and then, seeking her innocent and careless attendants, returned to her apartments.

When the festivities of the day were over, the King, as had been previously arranged, prepared to return with his Court, for the despatching of some weighty affairs early on the morrow, to Pavia, whence he would repair on a grand hunting expedition that was to detain him several days. He took an affectionate leave of his lovely wife; and as he kissed her forehead and still burning cheek, Gundenberga little thought that their separation would be extended to so long and sad a date. The traitor Adalolf did not appear among those who paid their parting respects to the Queen, but in the long cavalcade that that night trod the road between Monza and Pavia there was not a heart so heavy nor a head so busy as his. His own vices and baseness permitted him not to place confidence in the virtues and magnanimity of others; that the Queen, to whom he had offered such an outrage, should ever forgive him, was impossible—that she should keep the infamous secret seemed equally so—she had merely made the promise to escape from his despair at the time, and the first moment of confidential intercourse with her husband would be employed to establish her own virtues in his eyes, and to sign the death-warrant of her insulter. He blessed his stars that the King should not pass that night with his lovely wife, and he employed all his wits and infernal malice so to direct events that he should never pass another in her society.

The business of state among the Lombards was usually despatched with that speed which suited the tastes and habits of an impetuous, warlike people, much more addicted to the saddle and the hunter's cry, than to the council board or long speeches. The

national assembly, that met with the primitive forms and character of a free people the following morning, in an open plain\* without the city of Pavia, had terminated its discussions long before noon; and after a hearty repast the King and his train, and those invited to the grand hunting-match, mounted their impatient steeds and rode off for their favourite pastime. The whole of that day, Adalolf, whose duty kept him near the person of his master, was observed to be in a melancholy mood. His head was constantly bent in deep thought, and sighs were frequently seen to heave his breast; and indeed, though he studied that all this should be seen, there was no need for much affectation, considering the perilous ground he fancied himself to stand upon, and his *real* dastardly fears. The next day, although the sport was most inspiring—although the wild boars and the red deer fell before the Lombard lances in heaps hardly ever seen equalled before, the favourite continued in the same mood; nor at night, when in joyous repose the glories of the day were reviewed, and each sportsman told some dexterous feat or hardy prowess, had the blue-buffalo horn filled to the brim with the juice of the grape, and the contents of the horn, the prescribed quantum of every huntsman's draught, any power to enliven Adalolf, whose principal recommendation on other occasions was that he was the gayest of the gay, and, if not the best wit in company, the very first to laugh at the jokes of others. King Arioald had observed all this, and frequently rallied his dull minion to no purpose. As he was preparing to go to rest for the night, and his favourite was throwing his mantle about him to protect him from the dews, he again asked Adalolf, but in a more serious tone, what so pressed upon his spirits. This was the moment the villain panted for. "He would not distress his master," he said; "if he was sad, it was not on his own account, but on that of his noble and generous King. And yet were it better to preserve silence than for ever to disturb his peace." These preludes, as he proposed, and other hints of an alarming

\* "The Lombard kings of Italy convened the national assemblies in the palace, or more probably in the fields of Pavia."—Gibbon, ch. xlv.



nature, only increased the King's curiosity. Arioald took him aside, out of hearing of the huntsmen, who, however, were by this time all fast asleep, without fear or thought of domestic or any other treason, and there, in an open glade of the forest, beneath a bright and spotless moon, whose face was not purer than the fame of her who was "done to death by evil tongue," he listened to a tale of the deepest atrocity. Adalolf informed him he had made the discovery, the source of all his grief, that his Queen, Gundenberga, had maintained for a considerable time a secret correspondence with Tasone, the tributary Duke of Friuli; nay more, that for three successive days she had privately entertained the Duke in the Palace of Monza during her husband's absence; and that she had fully arranged an adulterous plot to poison him, and to give Tasone possession of his bed and crown. Had the stings of ten thousand adders assailed the delicate organ—had streams of molten lead or boiling oil been poured into his ear—Arioald would not have felt the maddening pangs that the traitor's words—now spoken hesitatingly, now, as it were, wrung from him only by threats and force—inflicted on the too credulous King. Adalolf was his bosom favourite, one on whose affection and honour he placed implicit reliance; yet when he recalled the image of his beautiful and candid wife, when he thought of her tried love, of her education under her mother, the sainted Theodolinda, and of all the virtues displayed during a union which had already counted years and years of happiness, he could not credit this sudden and atrocious guilt, and he vowed to immolate the slave who had blackened her name, unless he could produce proofs of his words.

This movement of his mind and passions was also anticipated by the wary villain, and he went and summoned one of the royal attendants to the presence of his master. His lesson had been well taught him; for the suborned wretch, a Lombard, and a native of Friuli, which latter quality was artfully assumed as having been the cause of the choice—distinctly and repeatedly attested that he had carried messages between the Queen and the Duke; and he swore moreover, in the name of St John the Baptist,

that he had seen Tazone secreted in Gundenberga's chamber at Monza.

The following day the King of Italy had other business to occupy him than hunting. Having left the forest with his favourite Adalolf and no other attendant, before midnight, and having ridden at a furious rate, he reached Pavia as the morning mist curled away from the tranquil surface of the Tesino, which then, as now, washes the city walls, and with a bursting heart entered his capital as his happier subjects, renovated by sleep, were repairing to the light labours of another day. He hastily summoned a few of his most valued friends or counsellors, and with a blushing face and trembling frame propounded the story of the Queen's guilt and his disgrace. In the first ebullition of his passion he could contemplate nothing less than public exposure, and a death of lingering anguish and infamy, as the fitting punishment for his wife ; but by degrees he listened to the voice of prudence, and it was determined that Gundenberga should be seized and confined for life in a solitary fortress.

Meanwhile the Queen, happy in the consciousness of innocence and the discharge of her religious and moral duties, was seated with her handmaidens in the bowers of Monza, employed, according to the primitiveness of those times, with the distaff and the needle. It was near the hour of noon, and the royal dinner had just been announced, when a Lombard chief, with a numerous armed escort, arrived at the palace, and without attending to the usual etiquette of the place, stalked at once into the presence of the Queen, and desired her to rise and follow him. At first surprised and offended, and then thunderstruck at what she heard, she asked the meaning of such an uncourteous intrusion, and whither the warrior would conduct his Queen in so sudden and peremptory a manner. The reply was brief, and even harsher than his previous intimation. He had the orders of the King his master, and of his Majesty's council for what he did ; he was to transfer her person to another and a safer spot ; and as his commission brooked no delay, *she must* at once submit and accompany him. Gundenberga, wringing her hands and exclaiming she was the victim of treachery and

treason, and that her lord never could have issued such a mandate, refused to move from the spot. The iron-hearted Lombard replied by striking his heavily spurred heel on the floor ; at which signal a troop of wild-looking gasindj rushed into the room and surrounded the person of the Queen. Gundenberga looked upon the affrighted group of her handmaidens ! They could only weep and tear their flowing hair. She looked into the court-yard of the palace ; it was occupied by armed men, who had made her attached servants prisoners. She felt that she could offer no resistance but such as would be at once undignified and futile ; and then the high-minded woman, summoning up all her spirit, waved her hand to the chieftain to lead on where he list. At the gate of the palace the Queen was mounted on a horse, and a thick veil or cloak, which effectually concealed her person, whilst it prevented her seeing, being thrown over her, and a man taking her bridle-rein in his hand, the cavalcade left Monza and proceeded across the plain of Lombardy at a brisk pace. They never stopped till nightfall, and then it was that the hapless Gundenberga, whose mind was utterly overwhelmed, was informed she was at her journey's end. In dismounting from her horse she threw off her covering, and saw to her horror that she was standing at the foot of an old and massy tower, that black and stark rose in the dim twilight. No peaceful cottage—no vestige of human habitation was near it ! it stood alone in savage solitude, and seemed a den made for deeds of blood and secrecy.

As Gundenberga, carried forward by the gasindj, crossed the threshold of its gate, she felt as if she had passed the threshold of death ; and though no words or signs of terror escaped her, she inwardly and earnestly prayed that Heaven would assoil her from the sins of life, and give her strength to meet her doom. She was borne up a winding and dilapidated staircase, which terminated at a low, black, iron-bound door. This door was opened, and she was thrust within a small chamber—the gasindj lit a cresset-lamp that was suspended from the ceiling, and then, departing, fastened the strong door, without saying a word to the royal captive. A few minutes after she heard the tramp of horses' feet, which being

soon lost in distance, the awful silence of the grave succeeded. A dreadful thought occurred to Gundenberga. "They are gone!" she cried, "and have left me here to die the most horrid of deaths—of hunger!" Distracted, she looked round the murky room, most imperfectly illuminated by the small and solitary lamp: there was a chair, a table, a large crucifix rudely carved in wood, and a humble pallet. On the latter she threw herself, breathless and exhausted, and covered her eyes and throbbing temples with her cold hands. She had not been long in this attitude of despair, when she heard heavy footsteps ascending the stairs; they stopped at her door, and she fancied she distinguished, mixed with the noise made by the withdrawing of the bars that secured it, the rattling of swords. "Merciful Heaven!" cried she, springing to her feet, "is my fate then to be more immediate? Are they coming to destroy me? Am I to die now?" A man entered the room—he looked not like the minister of murder, for he was old and bending under the burden of a basket of provisions and some articles of furniture, and his dress and physiognomy denoted an Italian and not a Lombard. In the most penetrating tones the Queen addressed herself to this domestic, and asked why she was thus imprisoned, and what was to be her fate; but he only shook his head, and answered not. Again, and more earnestly, seizing him by the arm as she spoke, did she ask the same questions. The Italian again shook his head, sighed deeply, and pointed with his finger to his open mouth. Gundenberga looked, and discovered, to her horror, that the poor wretch's tongue had been cut from its roots—a punishment for political or other offences, not unfrequently inflicted by the conquerors on the Italians in those times of barbarity.\* The unhappy mute deposited his basket, spread a coverlet on the pallet, arranged the other few things he had brought

\* It would be unjust, however, to confine these cruelties to the Lombards—they had been practised long before their conquest of the country, and continued to be so long after their fall. The Church of Rome might have set an example, and yet we find it continually avenging itself on its enemies in the same mode. But it was among the Greeks of the falling empire that the burning out of eyes, the cutting of tongues, hands, and other horrid mutilations, were most frequent.

with him, and bowing respectfully, and it seemed commiseratingly, to the Queen, left the chamber and closed the heavy door on her. Shut out from every means of obtaining information as to her present condition and its cause, she busied her burning head with wild conjectures. That which assumed the character of probability to her eyes was, that Arioald, by some unexpected revolution had been hurled from the throne or killed, for her noble nature would not permit her for a moment to believe that her cruel treatment resulted from her husband's orders. The intense sufferings were at length suspended by a deep and merciful sleep.

When Gundenberga awoke, the sun was high, and his cheerful rays illumined, as if in mockery, the gloom of her living sepulchre. She was parched with thirst, and faint with hunger :—the basket on the table stood before her, and on unclasping it she found it contained a small vessel of water, another of wine, and some plain viands. Eagerly she grasped the vessel of water, and eagerly was she about to drink it, when the dread idea of poison flashed across her mind, and she put it down untasted. She passed a day of horror. At the approach of evening the cell-door was again unbarred, and the same sad old man entered with another basket of provisions. On seeing the one left the night before untouched, he pressed the Queen with signs, to partake of its contents. "There is poison in those draughts, or in those viands," said she, in a hollow whisper. The mute shook his head negatively, and renewed his invitations. She watched his countenance : if there was poison there, he certainly did not know of it—nay more, he drank of the water and the wine, and ate of the viands he had just brought. The fear of this mode of destruction now quitted her, and the Queen Gundenberga partook of the peasant-like repast laid before her.

We will not enter on the long monotony of sufferings endured by this virtuous woman, but turn to one who, in the possession of blessed liberty, and with the gay, open sky above him, and the fair earth all free before him, suffered far more than she in her dungeon : this victim was the royal attendant, who, won by the gold of the traitor Adalolf, had perjurally borne testimony against the Queen.

From that fatal night in the forest, when he made the guilty, impious oath, he knew no peace. His conscience harassed him by day and by night ; and in the weakness of his superstition he fancied that St. John the Baptist, his protecting saint, by whom he had sworn—and falsely sworn—incessantly pursued him, like the Furies of ancient times, with fiery scourges, and with threats of torture that dried up the marrow in his bones. And in process of time, so much did this dread and this conviction of a supernatural interference gain upon him, that whenever he approached a church, he felt an invisible hand\* thrust him back from the porch, so that he could no longer enter therein and pray to his God. Months, years, every hour of which was overcast by his crime, passed away, and the future promised no repose. At last he could bear the burden no longer ; and imparting the whole of the nefarious secret to a hermit, he instantly fled from Lombardy to the states of the Greek Exarch of Ravenna.

The duty, or the task, thus left to the holy man was replete with difficulty ; but, it should appear, he acquitted himself with ability and success ; for some two months after, ambassadors arrived at Pavia from Dagobert, the King of the Franks, to demand of the Lombard monarch, Arioald, satisfaction for his ill-treatment of his wife Gundenberga, a princess connected by blood with the Frank king, as being daughter of Theodelinda, whose father was Garibald the First, Duke of Bavaria, and whose mother was Gualdrada, widow of Theobald, King of the Franks. When the cause of the cruel imprisonment was explained, one of the Frank ambassadors (they having probably pleaded in vain, with the testimony of a

\* This superstition of the invisible hand belongs to the times. According to the chronicles, an impious Lombard was thus punished by St. John the Baptist for having violated a royal tomb in the church of Monza. Paul Warnefrid, who tells the story, swears that he had it from those who had seen the miraculous fact. A Protestant may smile at the doubts of the Catholic Muratori. "*Pare anche strano,*" says he, "*che San Giovanni Batista, beato in cielo, si prendesse tal cura del sepolcro di un Principe eretico, condannato da Dio alle pene infernali.*"—*Annali. ann. 652.* The tomb in question was that of Rothar, the lawgiver and benefactor of the nation—but Rothar was an Arian !

poor hermit based on the confession of a fugitive menial, who was nowhere to be found,) proposed what was impiously called the "Judgment of God," or a decision of guilt or innocence by means of a duel. Arioald was obliged to conform, and his favourite Adalolf was met on the field by a warrior named Python, who sustained the Queen to be void of offence, and her accuser, his opponent, to be a calumniator and traitor. For once, at least, the chances of the sword and of single combat were in favour of right: Adalolf was slain by the Frank; and Queen Gundenberga, after three years' confinement, was liberated from the tower of Lomello, or Lomellina, situated in a then solitary spot between the Po and the Tesino, and restored to honour and her throne, on which she continued to reign happily for many years.\*

Fredegarius. In Chronic. ch. 51.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Seventh Century.

#### LOMBARD EPOCH CONTINUED.

636.—Arioald, the husband of Queen Gundenberga, died ; and the Lombards, leaving to the Queen the liberty enjoyed by her mother Theodelinda of disposing of the crown by marriage, she gave it to Rothar, or Rotharis, Duke of Brescia. This Rothar also was an Arian ; and as the Queen, and by this time a great portion of the Lombard people, were of the orthodox faith, each city of the kingdom had two bishops,—the one catholic, the other Arian. A most remarkable—a unique example of mutual tolerance for those days.\*

643.—Rothar drew up and propagated a code of laws, which with its amendments made by his successors, has merited very distinguished praise.

653.—Was memorable for the persecutions sustained by Pope Martin V. Still subject to the Eastern empire, Rome saw her Pope forcibly torn from her bosom by the Greek Exarch and conveyed to Constantinople. As early as this time the Saracens had made descents in the island of Sicily, and Italy saw herself threatened by a new and ferocious enemy.

662.—Grimoald Duke of Benevento, (which tributary Lombard state had vastly increased in power,) with the assistance of Thrasimond Count of Capua and others, ascended the throne of Italy, having treacherously assassinated the King Godebert.

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\* Muratori, Annali, ann. 636.



## The Wandering King.

Tra male gatte era venuto il sorco :  
Ma Barbariccia il chiuse con le braccia,  
E disse : State in là mentr' io lo 'nforco.

DANTE, *L'Inferno*.

IN the year of our salvation six hundred and sixty-one, and the ninth of the reign of Aribert, a Bavarian by birth, and King of the Lombards, death took the sceptre from his hands, and he was buried in the church of San Salvator, which he himself had built, beyond the occidental gate of Pavia.\*

This virtuous monarch left behind him two sons, Bertarid and Godebert ; and by his will or dying arrangements, which provided that the kingdom of Italy should be equally divided between them, he annulled all the good of his reign, and prepared sufferings for his subjects and ruin for his children. Bertarid, the elder of the two princes, fixed his residence in the good city of Milan, and Godebert remained in the palace of Pavia ; but their father was scarcely cold in his grave, ere fiery hate broke out between the royal brothers. Bertarid, the first-born, saw with spite his younger brother made equal to himself ; and Godebert seems to have been persuaded at an early moment, how much more pleasant it would be to reign alone, and to have an undivided crown, as the Lombard kings before him had. Our peaceful propensities may die effectless for want of sympathy or echo ; but it is never found, in this

good world of ours, that men who are inclined to quarrel and to plunge in war are unprovided on either side with encouraging or provoking spirits. The flames of mad, unnatural discord were cherished to such a degree that the minds of the brother kings were wholly consumed by them, and they no longer entertained view or wish but to seize the one on the states of the other. Full soon they had recourse to arms, and the Lombards were treated with the fratricidal spectacle of their banners opposed to each other on a field of blood. By supposing the younger to be the weaker of the brothers, we admit of some excuse for the guilt of Godebert, who despatched a favourite, Garibald, Duke of Turin, to call in Grimoald, Duke of Benevento, to assist him in his war against his brother Bertarid. But the ambassador was a traitor, and no sooner had he arrived at Benevento, and seen the power and wealth of that state, than he proposed to the Duke Grimoald, that he should take up arms, not for the young King Godebert, but to seize the kingdom himself.

The Duke of Benevento had valour and ambition equal to any enterprise. The envoy's representations were most seductive, and patriotism might have excused one of them. "Alas !" said Garibald, "what has not the kingdom suffered already—what has it not still to suffer, under the divided government of two kings—youthful, inexperienced, and driven on with insane hate against each other? On the other hand, you, Duke of Benevento, are of mature years, noted for valour in the field, and wisdom in the council-chamber ; lift but your lance, and both parties will rally round you, and leave the boys. You can and you must save Italy, and restore the good system !" The aspiring heart of the warrior was won by this syren song,\* and, without losing time, he marched with a strong body of troops towards Pavia, leaving the city and duchy of Benevento to the care of Romoald, his son. The steps of Grimoald were secretly preceded by his emissary Thrasimund, Count of Capua, who, passing through the cities of the dukedom

\* "Piacque il canto di questa Sirena all' ambizioso Grimoaldo."—Muratori, *Annali*.

of Spoleto and of Tuscany, prepared men's minds for the great political change, and gained friends and partisans for the Duke of Benevento. Thrasimund, indeed, was so successful in his missions, that when his employer reached the Emilian Way, above Modena, he joined him with a numerous and devoted army.

With these forces, and a purpose carefully concealed, the Duke of Benevento advanced to Piacenza, whence he despatched the traitor Garibald, to inform his master of his much desired approach. The young King received the returning messenger with a transport of joy, and flattered himself that with the Duke of Benevento's aid, he should have nothing to fear from his brother. He was artfully advised to receive and lodge the Duke in the royal palace where he himself dwelt. When Benevento reached Pavia, the gates were thrown open to him, and he was welcomed as a deliverer; but before his audience in the palace, the perfidious Garibald whispered in the ears of the King that the Duke might entertain treasonable designs, and that it would be well to wear armour concealed under his robes, at the approaching interview. At an hour appointed, the hall of audience was thrown open, and the youthful sovereign met half-way his powerful vassal or ally, and they embraced. "Ha!" exclaimed the Duke of Benevento with well feigned horror, at feeling arms beneath the King's dress, "am I betrayed!" He again embraced his sovereign, but that time a short dagger was drawn, and the youthful Godebert fell dead from his embrace.\*

On learning this fatal news, Bertarid, the King of Milan, wept too late the enmity between him and his brother which had caused the catastrophe; but the Duke of Benevento did not allow him much time for the tranquil indulgence of grief; so rapid and decisive were all his movements, that he was almost immediately before Milan with an army and a suite of Lombard chieftains that seemed to increase with every hour. Overpowered with horror

\* Paul. Diac. Bossi, Storia d'Italia, cap. xxiv. "E Grimoaldo trovando il re armato nell' abbracciarlo, colse quel pretesto, e colla sua spada l'uccise, dopo di che, la reggia occupò."

and panic, Bertarid fled from the city, and so great were the difficulties attending his escape, that he was obliged to leave a wife and an infant son behind him. These fell into the hands of the victor; and it was esteemed in that era an effort of sublime virtue that he did not put them both to death. He sent them prisoners to a castle in his distant city of Benevento. After these important transactions, which left him undisputed master of Lombardy, Grimoald had no difficulty in inducing the national diet assembled at Pavia to proclaim him king; and to strengthen his grasp on the "iron crown," he gave his hand, so recently wet with her brother's blood, to the sister of the late Godebert, and of the fugitive Bertarid.

About three years since these events in Italy had elapsed, when one night two travellers sought refuge from storm and darkness in a rustic cabin on a ridge of the Trentine Alps, that looked towards the plains of Lombardy. Their garments were old and soiled, their sandals were torn, their beards matted, and their whole appearance denoted they had come from a far-off land, and without the comforts which even in those days were thought essential to long wayfaring. Their spirits seemed as much dulled as the cloth of their coats, and they sighed frequently, until supper was ready! But when that meal was finished—they had not spoken a word during its progress—their hosts were astonished at the revolution in their humour; and as they conversed the one with the other, they began to wonder who and what they could be.

"Pile up the wood on the hearth," said the younger of the travellers, after astonishing the mountaineers with his loquacity; "and, Onulf, fill up another cup of wine. It is long, you know, since we have tasted the juice of the grapes of Italy!"—"Long, indeed," said his companion with a sigh, pouring out the wine; "but whence, kind hosts, may be this good liquor?"—"Our districts are cold and poor," replied a peasant, "and our goat-skins are filled far away. The vines that furnish these ruby draughts grow on the sunny slopes of Rocalda!" The inquirer trembled as he withdrew the cup from his own lips, for the man had named his native place and the familiar haunts of his early

years. "Onulf," cried the younger of the two, "another cup to Rocalda! Why do you look so pale, varlet? We shall be there to-morrow."—"Ay, and there, and then what will betide us?" murmured Onulf, who from some cause or other was much agitated. "Fear not!" said the other: "is not your mind resolved like mine?—or would you have me again wander over the face of the unpitying earth?—or would you leave me, and by separating your fate from mine, insure at once your own safety?"—"I have sworn never to quit your side," said Onulf, "until \* \* \* and I will keep my vow, and you are cruel to suspect me of other purposes."—"Dolt! I suspect you of nothing," said the young man, playfully, "except a plot for spoiling the pleasures of the present moment. Is it not pleasanter here, by the side of this blazing hearth, than away there where we have been, among the snows, and the glaciers, and the giddy ravines? Are not these honest mountaineers better society than the Huns and the Avars—ay, or even some of the Franks we have visited? Is there not more wine in that skin to make us gay to night, and to-morrow shall we not see Italy again? I am a philosopher, Onulf, and you are none; and the long experience of a haphazard, trust-to-providence kind of life has been utterly thrown away upon you, if you have not learned to be happy on such an opportunity as this!"—"I have been happy on slighter grounds," said Onulf, speaking in his ear; "but to-morrow!—your perilous resolutions which you will not alter—*do* really depress my spirits somewhat to-night!"

"Between rest and journeying—between to-morrow morning and this night, twelve round hours have to elapse! And pray how long is it now since you or I have been able to count on twelve hours' repose and safety? Have a conscience, Onulf! twelve hours are an age to men in our circumstances,—and so fill the cup again, and let us enjoy as much of them as we can!" And saying this the gay wanderer took the wine from his obedient companion, and having made a right manful draught of it his own, passed it round to the mountaineers, who sat gazing in stupid wonderment at men who by their own confession had been among Huns and Pagans. A few more draughts, and Onulf,

who would have moralized his companion into a melancholy, was as gay as he : even the peasants left off wondering who they could be, to laugh at their jokes : the pine fire burned most cheerfully—when, as it would happen, the wine-skin was exhausted, and instead of a gushing stream, answered with a sober sad sigh to the pressure of the bacchanalian hand. What was to be done?—joviality could not halt there : but there was not another skin in the cabin ; the old host was quite sure of that ! And yet on the accidental display of a tiny piece of gold by the young traveller, which showed that if he could drink he could also pay, another skin, and a plump one too, was produced—also by accident perhaps.



With such good society the night wore pleasantly away, and it was a late hour when the travellers betook themselves to a bed composed of dried leaves and wolf-skins, where they found a renewal of pleasure in that sound sleep that fatigue, aided with wine, can bestow. With the morning, however, came less agreeable sensations ; the adventitious stimulus was exhausted ; they knew that every moment they drew nearer to danger ; and it was in a somewhat sad, and a very reflective silence that the travellers pursued their journey. Yet, on emerging from a deep and gloomy ravine, when they saw full before them, smiling in the morning sun, the fertile plains of Italy—their lovely, native land from which they had

long been exiles—a rapture of delight thrilled their hearts ; and after a silent flash of tears, gave words to their tongue. “ Onulf,” said the young man, pointing to the south, “ there is the world’s garden, whose recollections has made us sigh so often ! One of my heart’s wishes is accomplished, for, come death when it may, I have seen Italy again !”—“ And how beautiful she looks !” cried Onulf. “ Bless that wide-spreading plain—that broad river that flows through it—and those distant blue mountains ! Bless those vine-clad hills, and the hundred brooks that babble down their sides, and those tall poplar trees that grow by the streams, and the ilex that waves its green boughs on the steep mountains ! Bless them all, for they are beautiful, and their like is not seen in the world !” With frequent exclamations like these, they descended the steep Alps, whose Italian side is incomparably *more steep* than the reverse ; thus resembling the inner side of a stupendous mound or dike, erected to secure a fair champaign from the ravages of the waves. Alas ! that they should have proved so inefficacious in repelling the successive inundations of foes that have ravaged fair Italy, and drunk the waters of her river Po tinted with blood !\* Our travellers, whose excited feelings rendered them insensible to fatigue—and the labour of climbing a mountain is nothing, as will be acknowledged by the experienced pedestrian, to that of its long steep descent—continued their journey by narrow paths, so rough and headlong that they seemed made only for the feet of the goat or the chamois, and at last gained the fair plain. They prosecuted their way with increased speed, and towards noon came in sight of the *castella* or village of Rocalda. “ Here we will rest,” said Onulf ; “ it is twelve years since I left my humble home to enter your father’s service, and I have never seen my native spot since—there will be time to say a *paternoster* and a *requiescat* at my mother’s grave, and then we will continue our journey !” He had scarcely uttered this pious resolve, when a Lombard noble, with his suite, was seen advancing towards them by the road that led to the village. They had their reasons for

\* Filicaja’s Sonnet.

wishing to avoid such a rencounter, and turned to the right into some fields. But the Lombard, who observed their digression spurred his horse, and, galloping towards them, bade them halt. "What men are ye," cried he when he came up to them, "that avoid meeting us on the highway? Are ye foreign spies, for your garbs are strange?—or subjects, and true to King Grimoald?" "I should know that face and voice," said the young man to Onulf. "Yes! it is Count Baudo, once my sire's liege—and now he shall know who I am!" "In the name of Saint John the Baptist!" whispered Onulf, "have a care!"

"Villains and churls! do you not answer me?—Let this teach you better manners!" and the Lombard raised a lance he carried in his hand, as if to strike.

The younger of the travellers retired a few steps, and throwing off a thick fur cap that almost concealed his face, and crossing his arms on his breast, said boldly, "I am what I am. Does Count Baudo know me now?"

"I do not," said the Count, "and still I desire that information of you!"

"Then have three years, and persecution, and sorrow and toil, much altered me," exclaimed the traveller, "for you have seen this face ere now—Ay! Count Baudo, and trembled at its frown!"

"Baudo has not been wont to tremble," replied the warrior proudly, "and again I say,—Who are ye?"

"I am Bertarid, sometime sovereign of you and of Italy, and still the son of the good King Aribert!" exclaimed the young man.

"What words are those? Bertarid—you! and in this hapless condition?" cried the warrior, much moved.

"I had brief time to make my toilet," said the fugitive prince, "when I fled from Milan, and, in sooth," he looked at his uncouth tattered attire, "the garment-makers on the banks of the Danube have neither the materials nor the skill of those who dwell by the Tesino and the Po. And I have been a pedestrian wayfarer since I parted with my friends the Huns!"



"Prince Bertarid," said Baudo, who had attentively examined him as he spoke, "I recognise you—and by that gaiety of spirit which misfortune has not broken! But why here in the lion's den?—whither are you going?"

"To Pavia," replied Bertarid.

"To Pavia!" exclaimed the Count, with astonishment.

"Ay! to the court of him who holds my place—to Grimoald!" returned the Prince.

Baudo rode back to the road, and with a sign of his hand bade his followers return to the *castella*. He then approached the Prince, and dismounting, spoke to him with compassionate respect, if not with friendship.

"Know you not," said he, "that Grimoald is firmly established on the throne,—that Italy has never been governed so strictly,—and that we all, from the lowest chief to the highest duke of the Lombards, dread his severity and vigilance?"

"It is on this firm establishment and security I count," replied Bertarid; "for what can he now have to fear from me? and why should he not permit me all I desire—a quiet, modest life, in my own country?"

"But your rank, your rights, your descent," reasoned the warrior—"all must render you an object of suspicion to Grimoald, however modest and sincere may be your present wishes."

"Count Baudo, report speaks fairly of the magnanimity of Grimoald, and the voice of Heaven and earth would be raised against him, should he stain his hands with the blood of one who voluntarily throws himself on his protection."

"He was an invited guest, and he slew your brother by his own hearth," rejoined the chief.

"To gain a crown," said Bertarid, but not without shuddering. "and now he hath it."

"And will Grimoald hesitate at any crime which he may think necessary to preserve it?" added Baudo.

The dethroned King mused sadly for a while, and then said:—

"Hark ye, Sir Count! this is my last resource—I have pondered on my fate, and am resolved—I go to Pavia! I have wandered

so long, and have suffered so much, that, although with a spirit active for the enjoyment of life, and for whatever temporary pleasure fate may throw in my way, I sometimes fancy I would rather meet death at once, than prolong such a life. When I escaped from the walls of Milan at the approach of Grimoald, I crossed the Alps, and with this faithful man, my only attendant, I reached, after a thousand perils, the residence of the Chagan of the Huns ; I claimed his protection, and the barbarian generously accorded it. My life among the Pagans, a people of strange gods and abominable customs, was not a pleasant one ; but amidst them I was safe, until Grimoald discovered the place of my retreat, and despatched a peremptory ambassador to intimate to the Hun that he must give me up, or at least withdraw his countenance and dismiss me from his territory. A war of extermination was the alternative. The interests of the moment imposed on the Huns the necessity of preserving peace, at any price, with the Lombards ; and the Chagan, too generous to give me up to my enemies, secretly dismissed me, with a small purse of gold.\* Since that moment I have led the vagabond life of the accursed Jew—no one spot in this wide world would sustain me,—now here, now there, wretched everywhere ! To-day I have been received with open arms ; on the morrow, driven forth as an object of danger or suspicion. Where I have disclosed my rank, I have speedily found motives to suspect that my hosts, to captivate the good-will of a powerful monarch, were devising the means of giving me over to Grimoald. And I have fled. Where I adapted my bearing and language to the lowliness of my appearance, I have been treated as a fugitive hind, whom every barbarian might revile or spit at, and thence also I have fled. Even among gentler tribes and kinder hosts, the wounds of fortune have been unjustly attributed to the faults of the wounded. In truth, I have been a ship without sail and without rudder, driven to various ports and shores by the cold blasts of disastrous fortune. And when on these wild voyages, how would my heart beat, when I heard, as

\* Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 664.

at times I would, those who spoke of my native land!—of fair Italy, in which I was bred and nourished till I attained the age of manhood, and where, with due permission, I desire to repose my tired soul, and finish the time that is given me to live !”\*

The heart of the Prince's auditor was a kind but not a bold one. The first impulse of Baudo was to invite the fugitive to his home and his hospitality ; but the dread of Grimoald, whose power and vigilance and severity he had by no means exaggerated, deterred him, and he contented himself with saying :—

“ Prince Bertarid, your melancholy history brings tears to my eyes, and I no longer wonder at your desperate resolution. God go with you on your way ! I will be no hindrance to your steps, and may they lead you to better fortune than I foresee ! For my sake, mention not this meeting !” and, respectfully saluting, he galloped away.

“ A very churl !” cried the Prince, indignantly. “ Is this his courtesy to his sometime King ?”

“ Let us be thankful for what we have,” said Onulf, speaking after a long silence ; “ he might have bound us hand and foot, and, presented in that manner, Bertarid would have a worse chance with Grimoald, than when freely presenting himself.”

“ You are right,” replied the Prince, “ for so much I am Baudo's bounden servant. And now let us hasten to the village and pro-

\* The latter part of this speech is imitated from Dante's lament on his own exile, than which I know nothing more eloquent and touching. “ Poiché fu piacere de' cittadini della bellissima famosissima figlia di Roma, Fiorenza, di gittarmi fuor del suo dolce seno, nel quale nato e nodrito fui fino al colmo della mia vita, e nel quale, con buona pace di quella, desidero con tutto il cuore di riposare l'animo stanco, e terminare il tempo che m'è dato. Per le parti quasi tutte, alle quali questa lingua si stende, mendicando sono andato, e mostrando contra mia voglia la piaga della fortuna, che suole ingiustamente molte volte essere imputata al piagato. Veramente io sono stato legno senza vela e senza governo, portato a diversi porti e foci e lidi dal vento secco che vapora la dolorosa povertà ; e sono apparito agli occhi a molti, che forse per alcuna fama in altra forma m'aveano immaginato ; nel cospetto de' quali non solamente mia persona inviliò, ma di minor pregio si fece ogni opera, si già fatta, come quella che fosse a fare. \* \* \* \* Oh patria mia ! Quanta pietà mi stringe per te, qual volta leggo, qual volta scrivo cosa che a reggimento civile abbia rispetto !”

cure dresses less likely to attract attention on the road. Then for Lodi with all the speed we may."

We may spare the reader the particulars of a rustic toilet, and the journey across the Lombard plain, and meet the travellers at the fair city of Lodi, where they arrived without accident. Here, as it had been previously concerted, they were to part, the devoted Onulf going on to Pavia, and the Prince remaining in secret, until he should receive an answer from Grimoald. The separation of master and servant, who had hardly been out of each other's sight for years, was most painful, and provoked by the uncertainty of the future, and of their ever meeting again on earth.

The devoted follower, whose fears were more for his royal master than himself, reached the capital in a few hours, and obtained without difficulty an audience of the King.

The heart of Grimoald bounded with joy on hearing that the fugitive Bertarid was within his states; but his first thoughts were, to secure by his death his future tranquillity. More humane feelings however succeeded, and he determined to give the dethroned prince the humble asylum he sought, and leave him to the enjoyment of the life of a private individual in his dominions. Orulf could scarcely credit his good fortune when he heard Grimoald accede to his master's propositions, and pledge the word of a King that Bertarid might come to his court without danger or fear. With this message he returned to Lodi, and with his master speedily re-appeared at Pavia.

On entering the royal hall, Bertarid would have knelt before the King, but Grimoald embraced him, (he had no dagger in his hand this time!) gave him a fraternal kiss, and assured him with a solemn oath, that henceforward he was safe, and should experience nothing but kind treatment from him.\* A palace in Pavia was assigned to Bertarid, and it was the King's care to provide him with all that was considered in those times essential to the domestic economy of a person of rank.

It could not but happen, that among the citizens of Pavia there

\* Paul. Diac. lib. v. cap. 2.

would be some attached to the dethroned prince, and who, though they might not even contemplate his restoration to the throne, would be anxious to contribute to his happiness in the inferior condition in which they saw him. They visited him at his residence, and as his manners were attractive, and his spirit most convivial, their visits soon became both long and frequent. These innocent circumstances were misrepresented to Grimoald by some of his courtiers, and Bertarid soon had to learn that the King's suspicions were awakened, and that his situation was not so safe as it should be. Addicted by temperament and habit to wine, he now increased his potations, and studiously exaggerated their effects; and as the first Brutus had blinded his tyrant by an assumed idiocy, so he thought to lull the apprehensions of his, by gaining the celebrity of a confirmed drunkard—a character incompatible with lofty aspirations or ambitious projects. Had he at the same time shut himself up from society, he might have succeeded, but this he could not do.

Meanwhile his enemies were at work, and Grimoald, to whom they were incessantly representing that he was on the eve of losing his throne, at last despising the solemn vow he had registered in Heaven, and the rights of hospitality and humanity, determined that Bertarid should die. The traitor had recourse to art, prudently desiring that so horrid a deed should be perpetrated with as little noise as possible.

On a certain evening Grimoald, sent from the royal table (a token of friendship and consideration still prevalent in eastern countries, and perhaps then recognised by the Lombards) a present of choice dishes, and an abundant supply of precious wines, with the view that Bertarid, by banqueting and drinking, might reduce himself to a helpless state of inebriety, when it would be easy to dispose of him as the tyrant wished.

Whatever may have been the virtues and vices of the prince, he seems to have possessed in an extraordinary degree, the secret, if it is one, of securing the fidelity and affection of attendants. He had sat himself down to carouse on the insidious draughts, when a menial whispered in his hear the whole of Grimoald's plot

Instead, therefore, of drinking wine, Bertarid had water put in the silver cup, which he drank at frequent intervals to the King's health. As soon as he could, feigning drunkenness, he retired to his chamber, and summoned the faithful Onulf to consult on what was to be done on this new crisis of his fortunes. But they scarcely had time to collect their thoughts when they heard a noise below, and on looking out saw that the house was surrounded by the guards of the King. The next moment a happy inspiration came to Onulf. He and another confidential servant attired their master in the dress of a slave, and loading on his shoulders a mattress, with bed-clothes and a bear's skin, Onulf drove him before, swearing at him most lustily, and even beating him with a stick. On reaching the beleaguers without the house, the guards inquired what music was that. "Ah! Sirs," replied Onulf, "this ragged rascal had prepared my bed in the chamber of that foul drunkard Bertarid, who is snoring there, up-stairs, drowned in his wine. I will no longer stay with that madman! To my home! to my home!" and giving a fresh oath and blow to the prince, they both passed on undetected.

Shortly after the King sent an order that Bertarid should be brought to the palace. The guards entered and knocked at the prince's door. A voice within begged them for charity to let his poor master sleep a few minutes, for he was really so overpowered with wine\* that he could not stand on his feet. This was the voice of Bertarid's steward, who had shut himself up in the chamber on his master's departure. A messenger went to Grimoald with this request, but anon returned with an imperative command to carry the drunkard forthwith to the palace.

"Oh, for charity, let my poor master sleep a little longer, and make less noise!" replied the steward.

"Open the door!" cried the guards, "and let us obey the King's orders!"

"I cannot leave my master's head! he will be choked in his wine!" said the steward.

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*"Si cotto dal vino"* is the familiar and expressive Italian phrase used by Muratori.

"Open the door, or we will force it!" bawled the guards furiously.

"Presently, presently, my masters! only a little moment!" was the answer from within.

At length the guards, who perceived that the steward was temporizing with them, carried their threats into execution, and broke open the door of the chamber. Their surprise and mortification were great, when, instead of seeing the prince, only the domestic appeared as its occupant.

"Slave! where is your master?—where is Bertarid?"

"You may see he is not here," replied the steward.

"But where is he?" cried the guards, who had searched every corner of the apartment.

"I do not know; but I can tell you where I wish him to be,—where you can never find him!" said the domestic, boldly.

Duped and exasperated, the soldiers seized the poor Lombard by his long hair and dragged him into the presence of the King, as one accessory to Bertarid's flight, and deserving death. To their surprise, Grimoald, after having ordered them to release the steward, turned mildly to him, and questioned him as to the mode of escape employed by the prince. The domestic felt his last moment was approaching, yet he clearly described what had passed, and congratulated himself on the part he, as a faithful servant, had sustained for his master.

Having heard him to the end, the King turned round to his guards and household, and asked what such a man, who had laboured to elude his orders, merited. "A thousand torments and death!" was the universal voice. But the King's magnanimity triumphed.

"Not so!" exclaimed he. "By my God! he merits every reward, for he hath not hesitated to expose his life to save his master!" and then, addressing the steward, he added: "From this moment, be numbered among my servants—ease and affluence shall be yours;—and if you but preserve for your new master the same fidelity you have shown for Bertarid, I shall be the gainer!"

The following day it was known throughout Pavia that Onulf

had not escaped with the prince, but had taken sanctuary in the church of Saint Michael the Archangel. On the King's word of honour being pledged for his safety, he left the asylum of the altar and appeared at the royal palace.

To Grimoald, who was desirous of knowing the farther particulars of Bertarid's flight, he replied, that he had lowered the prince from the walls of the city with a rope; and that he had been unable, alone as he then was, to make good his own descent, which he fain would have done, to follow his beloved master.

"You too have done well!" cried the King with proper feeling: "depart in peace, faithful and noble man—with liberty; I accord you the tranquil enjoyment of whatever property you may possess in this our city, or in our states elsewhere."

Onulf bowed and retired. Yet a short time after, on appearing at the palace and being asked by the King how his life passed, he candidly replied that he should prefer dying with his old master Bertarid, to living elsewhere in the midst of pleasures. Grimoald then summoned and interrogated Bertarid's steward, and hearing from him a similar answer, he dismissed them both, with servants, horses, and other valuable presents, and a guard moreover of his own troops to escort them on their journey. "And thus," in the words of the annalist, "having both made up good and abundant baggage, they went away to France to find their most beloved master Bertarid."\*

That young prince, whose life was destined to abound in such singular adventures, on escaping from the walls of Pavia, swam the broad Tesino, and finding a horse at pasture in a neighbouring meadow, he mounted it, and with all possible speed rode to the city of Asti, where he had some tried friends. From Asti he repaired to Turin, and probably not fancying himself safe from Grimoald in any part of Italy, he speedily took his departure thence, again crossed the Alps, and this time sought refuge not by the Danube, but the Seine or Loire.

In Clothaire III., King of Paris and Burgundy, the fugitive



found a prince less fearful of the Lombard power, and more inclined to war than the Chagan of the Huns, his former host ; for, on exposing to him the unjust usurpation of Grimoald, the strength of his own party in Italy, and the facility of his recovering his throne, the French sovereign prepared for hostilities, and marched an army towards the Alps, the year after Bertarid's second flight. The forces of Clothaire took the route of Provence, entered Italy by Piedmont, and arrived with none or slight opposition under Asti. But there ceased their triumph. Grimoald, who enjoyed the reputation of warlike valour united to all the artifices of war, met them with a formidable army. For some time the Lombards and the Franks seem to have remained in sight of each other without engaging ; but one afternoon that the latter made some demonstrations, Grimoald, as if seized by a sudden panic, broke up his camp and retired on Asti. He retreated, but he left a formidable enemy to contend with the Franks. He abandoned on the ground a portion of his baggage, an immense quantity of provisions, and wines, the strongest Piedmont produced. The Franks, who may have been short of rations in their own encampment, no sooner fell upon these good things than they began to make the usual use or abuse of them. The retreating Lombards were forgotten, and by nightfall, disordered and drunk, but few of the Franks were in condition, not to follow them, but to stand on their own legs. The bountiful host was at hand to make them pay for what they had eaten and drunk ! At the dead of night, when buried in sleep and inebriety, Grimoald rushed upon them, and with such slaughterous effect, that few escaped to tell the tale of their reverses in France.\*

The result of this expedition, besides destroying all Bertarid's sanguine hopes, may well have cooled the affections of his ally ; but Clothaire III. died, sanguinary revolutions, and other sovereigns, of brief reigns, succeeded in France, and the fate of the fugitive Lombard was indeed miserable and uncertain. When,

\* Paul. Diac. According to whom, the field of slaughter, very near the city of Asti, was called in his days "Rio."

after vicissitudes of fortune, all but equal to his own, Dagobert II. grasped the French sceptre, Bertarid saw arrive at his court a friendly embassy from his eternal enemy King Grimoald. This could not but excite his alarm; and fearing some awkward trick from the members of the embassy themselves, he, who had fled so often, again took to flight, and with no other suite than the faithful Onulf and his steward. And now, whither could he go? He had tried the greater part of the continent of Europe, from the Danube to the Po, from the Po to the Seine, and had found no resting-place! But the deep sea flowed between that continent and an island formed for liberty:—the Anglo-Saxons were hospitable and of good faith—he determined to repair whither the oppressed from all lands have since sought and found an inviolate sanctuary—to England.

The prince and his attendants reached the French coast, and saw before them, on the edge of a dark stormy sea, and beneath a sky scarcely less gloomy and troubled, a long, low, white ridge, the humble exterior that our glorious native land offers to the gazer from a foreign shore.

"Onulf," said the Prince, with a feeling of despondency, "this is not all so inviting as fair Italy seen from the Alps!"

"Alas! no!" replied the follower; "but, unlike false friends, it may improve on closer acquaintance:—it looks rough and repulsive, but it may afford a safe asylum, which is more than we can say of any spot we have hitherto wandered in!"

"Amen!" said Bertarid, and he embarked with his suite, to try the terra incognita.

Scarcely, however, were the sails unfurled, and the vessel put to sea, when a person on the strand demanded, with a loud voice, whether Bertarid were on board.

"He is here," was the reply.

"Then tell him," said the same voice, "to return to his home, for Grimoald, his enemy, died three days ago."\*

The exile's heart leaped in his breast at such an intimation, and

impatient to speak with him who gave it, he ordered the mariners to return to shore. But when on land, not a person was to be seen.

The information, if indeed given, must have been miraculous, considering the short time of three days, and the distance from Italy to the Manche, and the superstition of the age authorized him to believe that the voice was the voice of God. The visit to the Anglo-Saxons was abandoned, and Bertarid, by cautious and rapid journeys, hastened to look after the Lombards.

Arriving once more, and with transport and impatience, at the bold confines of Italy, he again despatched Onulf, as his messenger, with instructions to meet him at a certain spot on an hour appointed.

His long sufferings were now to end ; for when he reached the place of rendezvous, he found not only Onulf, with confirmation of the reported death of the usurper,\* but a number of the Lombard chieftains and officers of the royal court, provided with the regalia, and all that was proper for his reception as their king. To the nobles was joined a multitudinous assemblage of the Lombard people ; both classes long since tired of Grimoald, who had not rendered a usurped crown popular by mildness and his subjects' love, but had kept it on his head through his violence and their fears ; and both now, with tears of joy and demonstrations of affection and enthusiasm, welcomed back their old master, who after nine years of exile and sorrow, returned to his country and

\* The death of King Grimoald is thus related by the Lombard historian. For some indisposition he had a vein opened, nine days after which, shooting at the bow with all his force, to strike a distant pigeon, he burst open the vein, and this wound killed him, though it was rumoured by some that the doctors applied poisoned medicines to his arm, on purpose to send him to the other world. The following character of the man by Muratori (we may spare the reader his discussion whether Grimoald were an Arian or an orthodox Catholic) is brief and quaint.

"Fu principe temuto da tutti, gagliardo di corpo, arditissimo nelle imprese, calvo di capo ; nudriva una bella barba, e in avvedutezza ebbe pochi pari."

During his reign he improved the code of laws, and disapproved, though he could not prevent, the abuse of duelling, or the absurd practice of referring men's guilt or innocence to a trial at arms.

his throne.\* Bertarid entered his capital, Pavia, which he had quitted by dangling at a rope, amidst a nation's joyous acclamations, with a retinue of nobles and warriors, and Onulf, his preserver, by his side. He gave the brightest lustre to the throne he reascended; and Paul the Deacon, who recorded his eventful life, terminates with this eulogium:—

“He was a loving prince, a good Catholic, endowed with rare piety, a scrupulous observer of justice, and, above all, charitable and the friend of the poor. His misfortunes had taught him mercy and humility, virtues rarely learned in high and prosperous fortunes.”

Romoald, Duke of Benevento, the son of the late usurper, did not attempt to dispute the crown with Bertarid, and on his application, at once gave up Rodelinda his wife, and his son Cunibert, who, ever since his first flight from Milan, had been kept in prison at Benevento.

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Seven years after this happy restoration, the following facts occurred, which are too interesting and honourable to the Lombard King to be passed over in silence.

A certain Wilfred, Bishop of York, driven from his home by some intrigues among the Anglo-Saxons, reached the dominions of Bertarid on his way to Rome. Whilst there, messengers arrived from England, offering immense sums to the King if he would throw the Bishop into prison, and prevent his going to Rome. The exiled ecclesiastic appeared at the palace, and was informed by the King of the answer he had given his enemies:—

“In my younger days, I also was driven from my country. I went a hapless wanderer, and sought and found refuge from a certain King of the Huns, and of the sect of the Pagans, who, with an oath to his false god, pledged himself never to give me into the hands of mine enemies, nor to betray me. After some

\* “Bertarido comparve di nuovo in Italia, e ricevuto fu con gioja dai Longobardi, che l'antico loro signore desideravano.”—Bossi, *Storia d'Italia*, cap. xxiv.

time the ambassadors of mine enemies came and promised with an oath to the same King, to give him a bushel full of gold coins if he would place me in their power, that they might kill me. To which the King answered, 'I would expect death from the gods if I committed this iniquity, and trampled on the vow made to my divinities.' Now, how much the more I, who know and adore the true God, ought to be far from such a crime? I would not give my soul to gain the whole world !" \*

\* To Eddius Stephanus, a cotemporary, who wrote the Life of Saint Wilfred of York, we are indebted for this beautiful passage. See Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 664 ; but Mabillon has inserted the whole of the saint's life. See *Sæcul. Benedictin.* t. iv. p. 1.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Seventh and Eighth Centuries.

#### LOMBARD PERIOD ENDED.

671.—THE Roman Bishops and Popes were every year increasing their influence and pretensions, but the Vatican was frequently disgraced by unseemly discord, and at times, two, or even three priests or monks pretended to the dignity, to gain or secure which, they would employ the temporal arm.

688.—About this time, Cunibert the Lombard king (son and successor to Bertarid) married Ermelinda, a daughter of an Anglo-Saxon king reigning in England.

690.—Cunibert was driven from his throne by Alachis, Lombard Duke of Trent and Brescia, but was restored shortly after.

696.—The Roman Church, at this period, was subject to unjust and not unfrequent persecutions on the part of the Emperor at Constantinople, the most important consequence of which was, the rise of the Popes in respect and power.

713.—The Lombard King, Liutprand, added some laws to the code, and in the preamble (with or without the consent of the Roman Church) he styles himself "Christian and Catholic King of the Lombard nation, the beloved of God." In the course of this reign, several other additions were made to the laws, all tending to prove an advancement in civilization and the science of government.

727.—For some time Italy had been convulsed from one end to the other, by the Iconoclastic heresy; but it was in this year that the intrepid Pope Gregory II. animated the Italians to resist the Greeks, and bade defiance to the Emperor at Constantinople. The worship of the holy images was insisted upon; it was declared a sin or an heresy to pay tribute to the Emperor; and as the Lombard King, Liutprand, at this juncture attacked Ravenna, the seat of the Greek government in Italy, it is probable he did so with the consent of the energetic Pope. An unsuccessful conspiracy was undertaken by the Greeks and their partisans to put Pope Gregory to death within the city of Rome. The next year, besides Ravenna, Classe, and many other places of the Exarch-

ate, were taken by the Lombards. It was this co-operation of the Lombards that saved the Apostolic See from ruin. In less than two years, Ravenna, and the other cities of the Pentapolis, fell again into the hands of the Greeks. About the same time Liutprand waged a less fortunate war against the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento—Lombard princes who had long considered themselves almost wholly independent of the kings of Lombardy.

735.—The heroic victor of the Saracens, Charles Martel, Governor by name, but, by fact, King of the French monarchy, had long entertained a friendly correspondence with Liutprand King of the Lombards; and now that he saw the hour approaching when he could assume for himself or his children the name and the crown of a monarch, he sent his son Pepin to the court of Pavia, begging Liutprand to accept him as a child of honour or adoption. King Liutprand gladly consented, and the function was performed with all solemnity, the King having with his own hand cut off the hair of the young Prince Pepin, which, according to Paul Warnefrid, signified in the style of those times, that henceforth he held him as his own son. Shortly after, having made him many and magnificent presents, he sent him back to France to his natural father.\*

At the prayer of Charles Martel, who was again attacked by the Saracens, Liutprand marched with a formidable army to his aid. At this movement the Saracens abandoned their enterprise. This event was immediately followed by others of a most important nature, that convulsed Italy and prepared the ruin of the Lombards. The testimony of historians is contradictory, and the facts would be too long to examine. In another war between Liutprand and the Duke of Spoleto, the King was accused of having devastated part of the territories appertaining to the Pope; whilst he, on his side, was indignant at his conquered enemy (the Duke of Spoleto) being received and protected at Rome, whence he soon issued, and it was said, under the Pope's protection, and certainly with Roman troops as allies, to renew the war against the King of Lombardy. As early as 728-9, Gregory II., hard pressed by the Lombards, had invited Charles Martel into Italy to protect him against Liutprand and the Greek Emperor at the same time; and now (in 740) the invitation was pressingly repeated by Gregory III., who saw the states of the Church ravaged, and Rome herself threatened, by the irritated Lombards. But Charles satisfied himself with returning presents and most dutiful messages to the Papal nuncios; Gregory III. died, and the tiara descended to Zachariah, who, though by birth a Greek, felt for the honour of Italy, and saw the imprudence of recurring, as his predecessors had done, to foreign arms. A pacific embassy reconciled Liutprand, who, after a short time, resigned to "Saint Peter" the towns he had occupied. Unfortunately, however, Liutprand continued to alarm Italy "with a vexatious alternative of hostility and truce,"† the Popes continued inimical, and the people unhappy.

\* Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 735.

† Gibbon, chap. xlix.

744.—Liutprand died. Ildebrand his nephew, who had been associated in his government nine years, was deprived of the crown seven months after his death, and Rachis Duke of Friuli was elected.

749.—A truce which had existed between the Lombards and the Greek Exarch was broken this year : and irritated by some acts of treachery on the part of the Romans, Rachis seized several towns of the Pentapolis and besieged Perugia. Pope Zachariah hastened to spare blood, and such was the effect of his tears and representations, that the King not only relinquished the siege, but his throne and the world, and shortly after with his wife and daughter received the monastic habit at Rome. He was succeeded by his brother Astolf.

752.—Pepin, the son of Charles Martel, was recognized as King of France by the Pope, and his master, the legitimate King Chilperic, was made a monk. This same year, Astolf, with the natural ambition that had animated his predecessors, made war on the Greek exarchate, and avowed or betrayed his intention of uniting Italy under one Lombard sceptre.

753.—Pope Stephen II., who had in vain remonstrated, repaired to France, where he induced Pepin to take up arms and chastize the Lombards.

754.—The Pope returned to Italy in the rear of a strong army that beat the Lombards at the *chiuse*, or passes of the Alps. The victorious Pepin then besieged Astolf in Pavia, and soon induced him to treat for peace. The Lombard King engaged himself by solemn oaths, giving hostages for their fulfilment, to restore all the towns and territories he had occupied to the Pope, and then Pepin returned to France.

755.—Instead of restoring what he had promised, Astolf, in a fury of revenge, marched against the Pope, who had repaired to Rome. He is accused of having exercised great violence and cruelty in the open country, of having stolen from the churches without the walls sundry bodies of saints, (relics of matchless value in those days,) and finally of having laid siege to the city itself. At his first apparition, Pope Stephen had despatched envoys by sea, to claim again the interference and protection of the French King, but time passed and he received no answer. It was then he resorted to the extraordinary expedient of sending a letter to Pepin, purporting to have been written by the Apostle Peter himself, who summoned the French King, in the most pathetic terms, to hasten to the aid of Rome. Eternal life in paradise was his reward if obedient and prompt, and the alternative was eternal perdition. Such an invitation could scarcely be declined : Pepin again crossed the Alps ; and Astolf, who seems throughout to have made very false estimates of his powers of resistance, was even more unfortunate than the preceding year. Again besieged in Pavia, he purchased peace by a large sum of money, and the obligation to surrender not merely what he had promised before, but several additional districts to which hitherto the Popes had never pretended. The victorious King repaired to Rome, and then it is that the donation of the exarchate and the Pentapolis, which certainly were not his to give, is said to have been made by Pepin to



**Stephen**—a donation on which thenceforth the Popes mainly founded their right to the sovereign possession of the territories of the Church, or the Patri-mony of Saint Peter. Yet the act or instrument of this donation was never produced ; and Ariosto, with wicked wit, places it with many other strange and lost things—in the moon.

756.—Astolf died without children, and after some violent discussions in the Lombard diet, Desiderius, with whom the monarchy was fated to expire, ascended the throne. He was soon opposed by an ex-King of the Lombards, the same Rachis who had renounced the crown for the cowl, becoming a monk in the monastery of Monte Casino. To strengthen himself, Desiderius sought the assistance of the Pope, with ample promises of obedience and restitution, and he was principally indebted to Stephen for his kingdom and the quiet retreat of his rival, who returned to the Benedictines.

758.—We find the Pope (Paul I., who had succeeded to Stephen II.) entreating Pepin again to carry his arms into Italy, to oblige the Lombard King to keep his promises ; while Desiderius complains, on his side, that the Church of Rome had excited the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento to rise against him, the Pope even giving his benediction in private to the arms of the rebels. These Lombard dukes, evidently at the instigation of the Pope, declared themselves the lieges of King Pepin, and also claimed the protection of his arms.

768.—The Lombards, who had been in such constant warfare with the Church, were called upon by the Faithful to chastise a sacrilegious intruder in the chair of St. Peter, and it was Desiderius who deposed the false Pope Constantine, and procured for the Church the liberty of election. The most horrible cruelties were committed by the Romans on the Schismatic or unsuccessful party. The tearing out of eyes was a familiar atrocity.

769.—The new Pope (Stephen III.), who owed the tiara to Desiderius, was further indebted to him for his life, the Lombard King saving him from a conspiracy of the Romans.

770.—Bertha, the widow of Pepin and mother of Charlemagne and Carloman, who now occupied between them the vast Frank monarchy, visited the Lombard King at Pavia, and treated for the following intermarriages :—Gisla, her daughter, and sister of Charlemagne, was to be given to Adelchi, the son of Desiderius ; and two daughters of the Lombard King were to be given, one to Charlemagne, and one to his brother. Such a triple alliance, by strengthening the Lombards, could not but be opposed to the ambitious views of the Church of Rome, and the project no sooner reached the ears of Pope Stephen III. than he showed his implacable hatred and his dark ingratitude to Desiderius, to whom he was so deeply a debtor, by writing a letter, in which the King and the whole Lombard race were loaded with the most vituperous terms, to dissuade the Frank monarchs from the match. This furious epistle succeeded in part : Carloman refused his spouse elect, but Charlemagne married his.

771.—Charlemagne, without alleging offence or cause, repudiated his Lombard wife and sent her back to her father, who profoundly felt the insult. At the end of the same year Carloman died—his brother Charlemagne seized his states, and his widow fled with her sons to Italy, where she sought and found an asylum in the court of King Desiderius.

772.—The disputes between the Lombards and the Popes, which had scarcely ever ceased, were renewed with great violence. Desiderius, advancing towards Rome, proposed that the Pope (now Adrian I.) should anoint and recognise as kings the orphans of Carloman, dispossessed by their unnatural uncle Charlemagne. On this condition he would complete every engagement he had contracted with the pontiffs. But interest and fear bound the Pope to the powerful Frank monarch, and he pertinaciously refused. On this the Lombard King seems to have devastated some of the Church territory—the Pope again clamoured for help from beyond the Alps—Charlemagne marched, and the melancholy overthrow of the Lombard monarchy happened as is detailed in the following narrative.





### the East of the Lombards.

I know I love in vain, strive against hope ;  
Yet in this captious and intenable sieve,  
I still pour in the waters of my love,  
And lack not to lose still : thus Indian-like,  
Religious in mine error, I adore  
The Sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
But knows of him no more.

SHAKESPEARE.

**I**N a lovely and secluded valley in the lower acclivities of the Tuscan Apennines, and in the rear of a village, there stood in the year of our redemption 772, a considerable mansion or castle, which had not been built by the hands of the barbarians,

but in its style, magnitude, and distribution referred to the days of the Roman Empire, and offered a resemblance to the ancient villas of emperors or patricians as we can now trace them in the descriptions of Vitruvius, and the ruins of them that yet remain.

A concurrence of fortunate circumstances had preserved this edifice in the midst of the general ruin that befell Italy, but perhaps it was indebted to nothing more than to its local situation. Retired from the high-roads, and far out of the line of communication between the great cities of the peninsula, it was necessary to seek for it, ere it could be seen; and to eyes more practised than those of the invaders, the dark, narrow gorge, its only access from the Tuscan plain, would hardly have betrayed the road to, or even the existence of, an inhabited and comparatively prosperous district. Successive streams of barbarism and desolation had swept by it, but it had remained one of the few happy oases in the wilderness of general misery, retaining in a prominent degree the language and the usages of the Romans. The descent might be dubious, and the style might savour of the ridiculous, at a period when an unnatural trio—the Lombards, the Popes, and the Greeks—occupied all Italy, and when there was *no* empire; but Leontius, the occupant of the castle in the valley, claimed as his ancestors some of the great names of old Rome, and called himself a patrician of the Roman Empire. If we allow him all his claims, the noble of the empire had returned to the poverty and primitive simplicity of the citizen of the early republic, for like Cincinnatus he was a farmer and cultivated his own estate. Deficient, however, as he may have been in what we consider wealth, he lacked none of the essential comforts of life, and a family of sons and daughters grew around him, such as the wealthy cannot always boast.

Late in an October evening, Leontius was sitting with his family round a large and cheerful fire. The night was dreary and stormy, the heavy rain pattered on the broad leaves of the maroni, or chestnut trees, that grew round the house, and they might have pitied the condition of those exposed to the “pelting of the pitiless storm,” or, by a less amiable process, have increased their own comfort by reflecting on the sufferings of others, when in a pause

of the noisy gate they fancied they heard the sound of voices crying as if for help or guidance. "Hark!" said Lucilla, one of the fair daughters of the Roman, "what voices are those at this hour and in such a night?"

"The voices of the wolves, I suppose," said Leontius: "what else can they be?"

But as wolves are not apt to pronounce such words as "Hilloa! ho! hilloa!—a light to guide our steps, in the name of the Virgin!" and as these sounds were soon distinctly heard, the Roman rose, and taking some branches of the resinous pine that were blazing on the hearth, descended to see what it might be, followed by one of his sons.

Seldom was aid more opportune; for, when they went out, they discovered, by the aid of their bright torches, two men on horse-back advancing to the edge of a considerable cliff, which in that direction formed the embankment of a mountain stream that ran at the back of the house. Another step or two forward, and by a precipitous descent the benighted wanderers would have found themselves with broken bones in the bed of that torrent.

"Back, back!" cried Leontius, waving the burning pine as high as he could to light them: "to your right there is a tall rock; behind it there is a path—take *that*—it will lead you to the edge of the stream, and we will show you where the bridge is." The strangers made brief reply to show they had understood his directions, and Leontius and his son ascended the stream a few hundred yards.

The family within doors, who had all quitted their comfortable fire-side, and were on the tip-toe of expectation as to who the visitors might be, presently saw their father and brother return with two men wrapped up in large riding-cloaks with hoods that entirely concealed their persons. The first duty of hospitality was to disencumber them of these streaming garments. Leontius and his son did this; but the surprise of the domestic circle was greater than their pleasure when they saw two Lombard warriors stand before them!

To refer to a somewhat less remote period, and to our own

country, the effect of this apparition was kin to what would have been produced on the minds of a Saxon family by the sudden intrusion of a couple of haughty Norman barons ; and though the rule of the Longobardi had now lasted nearly two hundred years, the Italians still continued a distinct people,\* and the seclusion of the Roman establishment in this Apennine valley had kept them almost strangers to their conquerors, whose insolence and ferocity however they had heard recorded in many a woful tale. They could not, however, expel those whom they had admitted, and it behoved Leontius moreover, as a prudent man, to behave courteously to these stray members of the ruling powers. Yet would it have been curious to observe the workings of the Italian's mind while doing this. He knew the low estimation in which he and his country were held by the Lombards, who, according to their own assertion, were wont to designate everything essentially vile by the epithet " Roman," and he, at the same time, made it his proudest boast that he was a Roman noble, and entertained of the Lombards an opinion not a whit more favourable than that which had been announced by Pope Stephen,† who, with more energy than elegance, qualified them as a perfidious, filthy, and leprous race, unworthy of a place in the list of nations, and in every way abominable. Whilst tendering his services, and offering his hospitalities, Leontius strove to maintain a bearing and semblance of dignity, and while conscious of his political inferiority, he aimed, and at times ridiculously enough, at a tone of equality with his guests, who to do them justice, were mild and well-behaved, and neither in manners or person disclosed any of the traits of the revolting portrait drawn by their inveterate enemy.

In truth, before that evening closed, there was one of the family, the young and lovely Lucilla, made the discovery that the younger

\* Some Italian writers have insisted on the fusion of the Lombards and the Italians into one people, which can hardly have been, when we see one code of laws recognized for the Italians, and another for the Lombards. Approaches to the union must however have existed after two centuries, and it might have been effected but for the interference of new conquerors.

† In the letter he wrote to dissuade Charlemagne from his marriage with the daughter of King Desiderius.

of the strangers was a very handsome man ; and as she met the glances of his fine, large blue eyes, which were frequently cast on her, and evidently in admiration, the Roman maiden already felt that it would not be impossible to love a Lombard. Indeed, in the course of the evening, on either side many of the antipathies instilled by theory or prejudice disappeared before the immediate and direct charities and sympathies of human nature, and both parties were glad of the chance that had brought them together,—an accident explained by the Lombards as having resulted from their quitting a numerous company with whom they were travelling, to find a shorter road over the mountains. The business on which they were wayfaring did not seem to be of an urgent nature, for they loitered the next morning, and an invitation from Leontius to pass the day at his *castello* was immediately accepted by the younger of the Lombards, to whom his companion seemed to pay extreme deference.

When time is short, lovers do well (or ill, as it may happen,) to make ready use of it ; and the manners of the age, and the simple single-heartedness of the Roman girl, must be her excuse, if Lucilla heard that day, and for the first time, the protestation and the sigh of a lover ; nor did she see the handsome Lombard take his departure on the following morn without having been consoled by the assurance that he would come again.

And he came again. Within a few weeks he reappeared in the solitary valley, and one, two, three days glided away with exquisite happiness ; but Lucilla's hopes—for she could already contemplate, though reprobated by her Church, and opposed by her father's prejudices, a union with a Lombard chief—her fond hopes, were for ever blighted, when on bidding her adieu, and kissing the tears from her innocent eyes, the stranger informed her, she had entertained and loved—her King !

The information was but too correct, the Lombard being no less a personage than Adelchi, who was associated with his father Desiderius in the kingdom of Italy. At the time of his first accidental appearance in the valley, he was secretly accompanying an important embassy to Rome, and the beauty of Lucilla attracted him thither on his return.'

The same charms made him sigh all the way back to Pavia ; but once there, amidst the splendour and the cares of royalty,—and the latter presently came heavily upon him,—it could hardly be expected he should occupy himself much about his mountain adventure. But the sport, or the capricious tenderness, or the easily disposed of passion of a thousand-ways-occupied man may be lingering anguish or death to a passionate and solitary woman, and we repeat but an old tale in saying that the lovely Lucilla drooped from that hour.

More than a year had passed since that stormy night when (*she* was the first to catch the ominous sounds) the voices of the strangers were heard in the valley, and Lucilla was seated by the same fire-side and with the same objects around her as then. The fate of Italy as well as her own had undergone a change in that interval. Charlemagne, invited by the Popes, had descended the Alps to redress the grievances of the “Holy Church,” and the throne of the Lombards was tottering to its fall.\* Events of such importance had reached even the secluded mansion of Leontius and the ears of Lucilla ; but it was not till now, at the conversation of a friend of her father’s who had just returned from some town in Tuscany, that she betrayed any interest in what was passing. The news of this Italian was, that the Franks had besieged and taken Pavia, the Lombard capital, and slain Desiderius ; and that the triumphant Charlemagne was now preparing his march to Rome

\* “E quando ’l dente Longobardo morse  
La Santa Chiesa, sotto a le sue ali  
Carlo Magno vincendo la soccorse.”

DANTE, *Par. d.* c. 6.

Yet the poet must have known that the fortunate Frank undertook the war of Italy from motives more powerful than those of assisting the Bishops of Rome. “Altro era il motivo della guerra che si gettava negli occhi de’ popoli, altro era quello che si chiudeva nel petto de’ dominanti. Bisogna risalire più alto per ritrovare la segreta cagione che mosse Carlomagno allo sterminio dell’ ultimo re Longobardo. Desiderio in faccia alla politica Francese era reo d’un imperdonabile delitto : egli avea dato asilo nella sua corte, a’ disgraziati figliuoli di Carlomano (suo fratello) de’ quali, come l’ ambizione non ha nepoti, Carlo invadeva l’eredità ed insidiava la vita : E Papa Adriano, stromento di sì basso delitto, ricusava egli pure di riconoscere gli sciagurati fanciulli.”

*Bibliot. Ital.* No. lviii,



g Adelchi a prisoner in his train. At this intelligence, Lucilla drew her hands across her brow, and was observed to remain a long while as if entranced : she arose at last, and retired with an expression of wildness and desperate purpose on her pale, wasted countenance, which was recollected afterwards by her family, and understood when too late.

The following day there was woe in the house of Leontius, for his fairest daughter had quitted it, and was nowhere to be traced. Meanwhile Lucilla, attired as a peasant lad, was traversing, and on foot, the bleak and stoney Apennines. She might be sinking with bodily fatigue, but her ardent soul was animated with a feeling and intensity of purpose all but equal to the performing of miracles. Adelchi, who had been humble enough to love her, might forget her in his elevation and prosperity ; but now, in the days of sorrow, the King might recollect an Italian maiden, and the lowly might aid the exalted. She would seek him in his prison—she would follow him through the vast world—and if she could but die for him she had loved, (what now was her life ?) her destiny would be accomplished to her heart's best wishes.

Such thoughts and persuasions had occupied her from the moment she heard of Adelchi's ruin, and these, with a passionate heroism and a devotedness that only love knows, carried her through a long, toilsome journey, and a thousand perils, to the gates of the "eternal city," where she arrived in time to see Charlemagne's pompous entrance. Alas ! how unworthy of her ancient freedom and fame, and her glorious capital and her "trebly hundred triumphs !"

Yet must we pause a moment to describe the pageantry accorded by the timid and ambitious Pope to this new foreign conqueror,—to this new transalpine occupant of Italy, and master of the "world's mistress"—Rome.

Adrian I., who then occupied the papal chair, and had been the promoter and a principal actor in the late revolution, which was to transfer the kingdom of Italy from the barbarian Lombards to the barbarian Franks, had received due notice, and was properly prepared for the reception of his royal visitor. Rejoicing in his

success, he sent as far as the city of Novi, or thirty miles, the magnates and the *senators* of Rome, (did these men not know the ancient value of the title, and blush at its debasement ?) as a fitting deputation to welcome Charlemagne.

The conqueror's progress towards the Apostle's tomb had been expressly timed ; and to identify the pomp and solemnities of religion with his mundane success, it was on Holy Saturday that Charlemagne approached Rome's degraded walls. At a mile from the city he was met by the unwarlike Papal troops, and hundreds of children bearing branches of palm and of olive in their hands, who thence preceding his steps, with songs and shouts pronounced the joyful welcome of the King of the Franks. The banners of Rome were unfurled around him, and one of them bore the proud impress of the ancient republic. A numerous *stuol* of ultramontane warriors, wondering at all they saw, marched with Charlemagne, and his rear and flanks were protected by a division of his army. When nearer to the city walls, a holier procession went out to encounter him, and at sight of the crosses and the relics of the Vatican, the proud conqueror dismounted from his horse, and on foot, with the retinue of his princes and noble officers, he humbly advanced to the temple, in whose porch Pope Adrian, in the midst of his clergy, awaited him. A flight of steps led to that porch, and as the King of the Franks ascended them, he made a spectacle of his humility, and kissed them one by one. Beneath the porch the Pope and the King embraced with studied cordiality ; and then Charlemagne taking the right hand of Adrian, they entered the church of Saint Peter's—" *dove con canti ed orazioni restò onorato l' arrivo di sì grand' ospite.*" The duties or ceremonies of religion being performed, the King and the Pope entered the city, but not until they had reciprocally sworn an oath for their safety, or that the one should not commit offence or violence on the other—a curious fact in the history of the times, which may show how much confidence and good faith existed between the vicegerent of Christ and the worldly monarch. The following day being Easter Sunday, the consoling mystery of the Resurrection was observed with all the splendour that the wealth and

ingenuity of the age and of Rome would allow. With impious pantomime and stage trickery, the Saviour of men was seen by the bodily and vulgar eye to rise from the dead, while the Pope and the King again embraced each other in the background of the sacrilegious mimicry. Two more days were devoted to the festivities of the church ere Adrian proceeded to the business of the state; but on the third day the Pope was importunate that the King should confirm the privileges and donations made by his father Pepin to the Church of Rome. Charlemagne was obedient and liberal, for he even added to the territory already granted to the Patrimony of St. Peter's; and the diploma, or his act of confirmation and reintegration, was solemnly placed on the high altar of the Vatican.

During these important proceedings, that might interest the fate of millions, where was she who was abstracted and absorbed by the fate of one? Alas! Lucilla had looked in vain in the procession for her royal captive lover; and after that disappointment she contrived to ascertain that the news of her Italian friend in the valley—the news that had so determined her—was incorrect or premature. Pavia, though closely blockaded by an army Charlemagne had left behind him, had not yet fallen, nor was Adelchi a prisoner. She closed her hands, and raised her eyes to heaven in silent thankfulness at this intelligence; but the sequel of the conversation from which she gleaned it repressed her hopes and her momentary joy. Although (it was said) the capital of the Lombard kingdom had not fallen, from the condition to which it was reduced it was impossible it could hold out when the victorious Charlemagne should reappear before its walls, which he would do in a few days. Verona then would be the only city that resisted the conqueror; but its state of defence was even weaker than Pavia, and Adelchi—(how did the heart of the Roman maiden heave within her whenever she heard that name!)—Adelchi, who commanded there, must fall into the hands of Charlemagne, from whom he could hardly expect mercy.

Her generous, devoted love now presented another and a longer journey to Lucilla. for she resolved to reach Verona and to trust

to chance (or perhaps she had confidence in a merciful Providence) for the means of seeing or serving the object of her heart's idolatry. To this end the masquerade which concealed her sex, her youth, and her loveliness, was artfully rendered still more impervious, and hiring herself as a *palefrenier*, or groom, to one of the courtiers of the Frank King, she took with him the road to Lombardy. Charlemagne's return was, as had been predicted, speedily followed by Desiderius' surrender, and Lucilla witnessed at Pavia the captivity of the father, mother, and sister of her royal lover. The history of the latter, or of the fair Ermengarda,\* the daughter of Desiderius was by this time familiar to Lucilla. Married in the bloom of her youth and beauty to Charlemagne, who had *now* worked the ruin of her race, that haughty monarch, for causes that are still a mystery, and without imputing to her the shadow of a crime, had repudiated her after little more than one year, had sent her back to her father, and at once taken another wife; thus converting into a copious and reasonable source of hate what had been intended to consolidate the good-will and friendship of the Frank and Lombard sovereigns.†

Lucilla might have wept before over this domestic tragedy, but her interest was immeasurably increased when she traced in the pale but still beautiful features of Ermengarda a likeness—a strong likeness—to her brother. From that moment all her ingenuity was directed to the mode of obtaining an interview with this unfortunate wife and daughter of a king, from whom her ardent fancy suggested she might obtain some information, or perhaps means

\* History has not preserved the name of the unfortunate daughter of Desiderius with any accuracy. By some she is styled Ermengarda, by others Berta, whilst others call her Desiderata. *Muratori, Annal. ann. 771*. I have employed the name adopted by Count Manzoni (See *Adelchi Tragedia*) and other modern Italian writers.

† This deed of Charlemagne's, which has never been justified or explained, had such an effect at the time on Adelard, a cousin of the King (and after death a saint), that he became a monk, thus wishing to escape ever again being concerned in such iniquities. "Gemebat puer beatæ indolis quod. . . . rex illicito uteretur thoro, propria, sine aliquo crimine, reprobata uxore. Quo nimio zelo succensus elegit plus sæculum relinquere adhuc puer, quam talibus admisceri negotiis." See *Life of Saint Adelard* by Pascasius Rodbertus, a cotemporary and disciple of the saint.

whereby to enable her to be of service to Adelchi. The difficulties of accomplishing this were great,—the overcoming of them did honour to her wit and ingenuity ; and the Roman maiden, in masculine and vulgar attire, *did* at last stand in the presence of the Lombard princess, and alone. But here her presence of mind, or her fortitude, utterly failed her : she knew not how to begin,—how to account for her interest in the cause of the King Adelchi ;—she felt she could not disguise the secret of her sex when she spoke on that subject, and to a woman. Speechless, trembling, she fell at the princess's feet, and bathed them with her tears. A glimpse of the truth struck Ermengarda before Lucilla had spoken a word ; but when, encouraged by the gentle, friendly tones of the sister of Adelchi, she declared her devotion to the King, and her resolve to serve him, or to die in the attempt, her disguise dropped from her, and she stood revealed a woman and a lover—and what save a loving woman could be capable of such devotedness ? At other times Ermengarda might have been more chary, certainly more curious, as to this Italian paramour of her royal brother ; but now there was time for the indulgence neither of prudery nor curiosity ; and every chance, however feeble it might be, was to be resorted to, in order to save Adelchi, whom she loved with all a sister's tenderness, from the hands of the ruthless Charlemagne. A ring—Adelchi's gift—a purse of gold, (for in all operations money was as essential then as now, though a small quantity went much farther,) the names of some of the warriors and attendants with her brother at Verona, and some other points of instruction were hurriedly given by Ermengarda to Lucilla, and they parted for ever with a tearful embrace.

The hands of Charlemagne had already been deeply steeped in blood, and in perspective he saw it flow from many hated veins, or enemies that might give him ground for apprehension. Adelchi, for example, was in the prime of manhood, enterprising and bold ; but age and sorrow had subdued the energies of his father ; and Desiderius, with his family, was magnanimously condemned to the imprisonment of a French monastery, where, if we may lend credit

to the monkish chroniclers of the period, his penitence was so efficacious, and his sanctity so well rewarded, that at his approach the heavy doors of the churches moved on their bronze hinges, and opened to him without the agency of mortal hands.\*

But we must leave him with the "odour of sanctity" upon him, and return to the fortunes of his more worldly son. Not many days after her interview with his sister, his Italian mistress, riding as a horse-boy in the train† of one of his enemies, saw across the plain the broad waters of the Adige, and the towers and beleaguered walls of Verona. Her impassioned soul fluttered at the sight, and she would have flown like a bird—like a stork to its nest—to the midst of that enclosure of horror that contained her heart's affections. At the approach of Charlemagne, he was met by a suppliant and melancholy retinue; and as we reflect on this scene and others, we may feel inclined to revoke, or marvel at, the award of the successor of Saint Peter, who had declared the successful King of the Franks to be the darling son of the Church—the just, the virtuous, the champion of Christ and the apostles—a second David. At the head of the procession that now met him under the walls of Verona, were the widow and the sons of Carloman, his deceased brother, whose royal inheritance he had usurped, and whose lives had been probably spared only by timely flight. The fugitives found refuge in the court of Desiderius, who, to the last moment, extended a bountiful, though perhaps a political, protection to them; but now Adelchi, driven to extremities, and shut up in a famished city, which might soon experience the horrors of a successful assault, had counselled them to throw themselves by time on the generosity or mercy of Charlemagne. The widow and children of his brother were admitted to his protection, but a horrid veil of mystery hangs over their after fate! The monks and churchmen, the only historians of the period, and who were all favourable to the ally of the Pope, never once make mention of

\* Malvecius, Chron. Brixian. tom. xiv. Rer. Italic. and Chronic. Novalic. p. 11, t. ii. Rer. Italic.

† "A horse-boy in your train to ride."—*Marmion*.

what became of them,\* “in all probability in order not to reveal a fact that turned to the discredit of Charlemagne, that is, his little humanity towards his innocent nephews.”

Lucilla, whose intelligent mind had acquired much knowledge of the world in little time, still could hardly conceive the existence of so much sin and sorrow; and the ardour of her passion, and her constant occupation in endeavouring to detect what was passing in the besieging camp, and to be useful to the besieged Adelchi, saved her from the heart-withering reflections her recent experience might have suggested, and from the impotence of despair. Though defended by a hero, the fall of Verona rapidly approached. Famine raged within the walls, and treachery was at work without. It would be long to tell how Lucilla became mistress of a plot by which one of the gates of the city was to be betrayed to the troops of Charlemagne,—how she gained admittance within the walls, and stood at last by night before her lover Adelchi—alone before him, as she had stood before his sister, but ah! with feelings still more wild! If an unseemly attire, and the dye of berries, and fatigue, and a scorching sun, disguised the Italian maiden, long-suffering, privation, exertions extended beyond the strength of nature, and at last despair, did almost as much for her lover. Where was the robust, yet graceful buoyant figure, where the gay, handsome face that had captivated her in the valley of her father, and had first awakened in her young heart the boundless sense of love? His frame was emaciated and bent, his cheeks were sallow, his brow wrinkled, his eyes hollow and ghastly, and his flowing beard turned grey and matted. But thus, was he less dear? Ah, no! The being beloved, the object of a pure, ineffable, and all self-denying passion, unlike every other object of human possession and price, wins on affection as it loses its own adventitious advantages, and Adelchi was now dearer, far dearer, in his sickness and woe than ever he had been before. Indeed, since the moment when, previous to his last departure, and beneath the shady

\* Anastas. Bibliothec. in Hadriani I. Papæ Vit. Apud Muratori, *Annal.* ann. 774.

chestnut-trees of the paternal estate, he had revealed his rank, she had been wont to think of him with awe: the story of his reverses and falling fortunes had diminished this; but it was not till now that he stood with his arms crossed, and his head sunk on his breast, that she felt she durst approach him with something like the familiarity of affection.

"Youth, you have most importunately sought our presence,—may I ask the object of your visit?" said Adelchi to the silent and trembling visitor, who trembled still more at the deadly hollow sound of his voice. Her reply was forced out word by word.

"Prince—King! I am one who would save you with my life:—I am come to show you that there is still devotion and fidelity to your cause, and——"

"By heavens!" interrupted Adelchi, "I have need of the conviction; for, since the day I was foiled at the passes of the Alps, I have scarce known aught save treachery:—my chiefs have betrayed me; my Lombards, my own blood and race, have one by one fallen away from me!—but, menial, what is this to you?"

"Menial!" cried Lucilla, throwing back her clustering hair from her forehead, and approaching the solitary lamp that lighted the apartment. "You have called me by a milder and a fonder name, Adelchi!"—"Ah! do I dream?" cried the King, grasping her arm, "or is a miracle performed, and the Italian maiden of the valley, here before me?" "Lucilla!" faintly articulated the young Roman—she could say no more, but, giddy and oppressed, well nigh fainted in the arms of the King. In his misfortunes and abandonment, Adelchi's heart might glow for a moment at the affection and devotion even of a solitary individual; that individual too was a female, and young and handsome, and already familiar to his tenderer feelings—yet, on reflection, he wished, in the generosity of his nature, she had not shown her love for him by deeds that might end in her own destruction. Something like this, which he expressed to Lucilla, revived all her energies.

"Adelchi, my King," said she, "these considerations for my fate should have preceded or prevented the scenes in my native valley, where you vowed you loved me, and taught me to love



you—now they come too late ! The destruction of my happiness was completed at one blow, when, departing thence, you told me the distance that must separate us, and indeed it is not much to sacrifice a valueless life !”—“ But, my sweet Lucilla,” replied Adelchi, “ you cannot bear, you cannot imagine, the horrors that await those who linger within these walls ! Do you hear those groans ? they are some of my few remaining faithful subjects expiring of famine. I would not see you exposed to sufferings like theirs—like mine !”—“ It is to save you from these, at the risk of sharing them with you that I am here. You must flee with me, and instantly,” said Lucilla, firmly. The King shook his head incredulously, and sighed. “ Is flight so easy from these doomed towers, and through the host of enemies that hold me at bay ?” The fair daughter of Leontius then concisely but energetically explained the interview she had had with Ermengarda, the use she had made of her money and advice, the means she had resorted to in order to facilitate his evasion in disguise, and to procure her own admittance within the walls of Verona, and she ended by disclosing the treachery that was to deliver the gate of the city to the besiegers, and by pressing again the necessity of instant flight. Adelchi might have believed his generous Roman maiden inspired with superhuman intelligence and spirit ; the surpassing talent and perseverance she had displayed in an enterprise of so much peril and difficulty, the justness of her reasoning and conclusions, and the firmness which, after the first moments of irresistible tenderness, she had assumed, all justified his reliance on her, and he would have followed her, when a sense of shame at abandoning those who had remained true to his standard till the last, and then a generous desire of making some of the dearest of his friends the companions of his flight, impeded his steps. Lucilla, who had tenderly drawn him to the threshold of the door of the tower in which the interview took place, hurriedly remonstrated, “ My lord ! my lord ! this cannot be ; we must depart alone. You cannot save your friends ; yet a minute’s stay and you may lose yourself : the posts I have bribed may be changed ; those who await me under the walls may be

scared away; even now the Franks may be within your betrayed gates. Adelchi! you would not be the captive of Charlemagne?"—"No! but I will flee to wound him, and now I swear to traverse the face of the whole globe to raise enemies to the usurper!" The Lombard girded his heavy sword to his side, took his redoubtable mace in his hand, and giving a casket, containing some gold and jewels, the melancholy wreck of his royal fortunes, to the devoted Italian, he desired her to conduct him whither she list. They had scarcely passed the Lombard guard at the battlements by the tower, when a tremendous tumult, and flames that suddenly rose on the darkness of night, informed the fugitives that treason had kept its promise, and that the "furious Frank" was master of the devoted city of Verona.

The hurried steps of Lucilla paused before a little postern gate in a solitary part of the fortifications, of the existence of which not even Adelchi was aware. She clapped her hands. The signal was answered from without, and the low door turned on its hinges. The door opened on the narrow ledge of a cliff that rose perpendicularly from the bed of the river Adige, and two men in disguise stood ready with cords to lower the fugitives to a skiff that lay close under the rock. The skiff was gained, and a silent boatman rowed it across the tranquil waves of the Adige, that were now red with the reflection of the conflagration. In a dark nook where they landed, the habiliments of a Frank warrior were found for Adelchi; and a guide, silent like the rest, who all did the bidding of Lucilla, as if she had been a mighty necromancer and they the spirits subjected to her control, conducted the King and her through rough, broken ground from the banks of the Adige to an open meadow, where he disappeared. During the passage from the river, which had been almost entirely performed on their hands and knees, and over rocks, or through thick brushwood, they had several times caught the voices of the exulting Franks, who were hurrying to the scene of carnage; and now, as they advanced a few steps, the Lombard King saw full before him a group of soldiers belonging to one of the beleaguering posts. Forgetful of his disguise, he laid his hand to his sword; but Lucilla again clapped her little

hands, and presently a groom appeared with two led horses. "All is well," said the menial, who spoke to Lucilla in her own language; "our post has not been visited; we have kept this avenue clear for your escape; take the path to the right that leads to the hills, and fear not Charlemagne!" The heroic girl having mounted, Adelchi vaulted in his saddle: the steeds were urged to their full gallop—they were strong and swift—and thus the last of the Lombard kings fled, lighted by the fire of his captured city, which by this time cast a lurid glare over the whole atmosphere.

From the banks of the Adige to the mouth of the Arno was a long journey, and it was made longer by the state of the country, which everywhere seemed devoted to the conqueror, and obliged the dethroned Lombard frequently to take unfrequented circuitous paths. The fatigue and privations of the way were great even for a warrior's strength; but at last the free waves of the Mediterranean danced before them, and at Porto Pisano\* they found a vessel belonging to the independent and already commercial republic of Pisa, which soon wafted them beyond all fear of the Franks.

Lucilla had saved her royal lover: his gratitude was proportionate to her heroic deeds. The flame of his love revived even from the ashes of his consumed fortunes; and when hope came with it, his ambition was made the servant of his love, and his ardent resolves to recover his kingdom were strengthened by the pride and bliss he should feel on placing the Roman maiden by his side on the throne of Italy. Lucilla was happy: a languor had succeeded the intense excitement and unparalleled fatigue she had undergone: her strength began to fail her from the moment her task was completed and Adelchi safely embarked at Porto Pisano. The morning and evening breezes, which wafted their galley over summer seas, blew on a pale cheek, and she must have felt the precariousness of health; yet still was she exquisitely happy, and with her lover by her side, she forgot all the world, and herself in him. Happiness like this, and repose, might have restored health;

but, alas! in a fatal hour, the King landed on the coast of the Peloponnesus to communicate with a general of the Eastern Emperor, to whom he was now repairing to supplicate for assistance. Lucilla, who could not bear him a minute from her sight, went with him. They slept on shore one night; the place was unhealthy—for Greece, fair Greece! was already desolated. She returned on board with the endemic fever. The assiduous, unwearying care—the tender, passionate affection, that may have sweetened her last moments, could not prolong them. Their bark was now gliding through the maze of the clustering Cyclades; and as she gazed on these fair sunny islands, she felt she was fast hastening to other regions, whose gloomy portal was the grave! Yet was Adelchi unable to conceive this, and he started as at the intimation of an unthought-of calamity, when to soothing caresses, and words that would cheer her with future prospects, she solemnly replied, “Adelchi, I am dying!” His agitation was increased when, on looking in her eyes, he thought he saw an expression he had never seen there before. It was some time ere he could reply, “Not so, my love; away with these vain fears! The fever will but have its course; our journeying will soon be over, and you shall have rest——” “In the grave,” murmured Lucilla. “No, my loved preserver! in my fond arms, within the secure walls of Constantinople! and when I take you thence, it shall be to place a royal crown upon your beautiful brow.” “A cypress wreath—a coronal of death,” said the fair Roman. “Yes, my lord—my love! you will give me this, and see me quietly interred in one of these remote islands!” The thoughts of Italy and home here flashed on her mind, and she shed some tears. The Lombard still clung to hope; and it was not with the idea of performing her obsequies, but in order to procure her assistance, and a more convenient domicile than a confined ship, that he ordered the mariners to steer for Milo, to which they were now near. The sun had sunk beneath the waves, and the sides of the lofty, peaked mountain of Milo were of the hues of the deepest purple as they made the island, and, propelled by oars, the galley glided into the confined, rock-girt strait, the entrance of its well-sheltered and

magnificent port. Lucilla was lying on deck, supported by Adelchi, who was speaking of the superior degree of comfort she would find here, and hoping the island might contain some Greek skilled in the healing art. She faintly grasped his hand, and raising her eyes to his face, said indistinctly, "Heaven assoil my soul! but it is painful to leave you, Adelchi!" Her heavy eyelids dropped—he took her in his arms—he felt a brief shivering. The galley anchor was cast off, but before it grappled the sand of the deep harbour, the fugitive, hapless Lombard embraced a lifeless body. Adelchi saw it not, but the next moment a star—a bright and solitary star—appeared above the high hills to the right of the port, as if the fledged spirit of Lucilla had repaired to the heavens, and looked earthward in loveliness and purity. The remains of the young Roman found a quiet grave in Greece, with such obsequies as her lover could command; and the ill-fated Lombard, who thenceforward never knew rest, continued his voyage to Constantinople. He kept the vow he had made on his escape from Verona, and wandered through the world to raise up enemies to Charlemagne; and if success did not attend his embassies, nor victory his banners, he had at least the warrior's satisfaction, after a life of consistent perseverance and innumerable perils, to die a warrior's death; for, after long years, in the Calabrias, at the extreme point of the Italian peninsula, he was slain in a pitched battle with the detested Franks.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Eighth and Ninth Centuries.

#### THE PERIOD OF THE FRANKS, OR CARLOVINGIAN EMPERORS.

774.—CHARLEMAGNE, who had thus overthrown the Lombard dynasty, seems to have felt a greater predilection for conquests in the North, than in the South of Europe.

With his means, it would not have been a work of much time or difficulty to have rendered himself master of the whole of the peninsula, with the island of Sicily ; but, as soon as he had dethroned Desiderius, he recrossed the Alps, to turn his arms against the hardy Saxons, leaving an important part of Italy still in the hands of the Lombard Dukes of Benevento.

It has not lain in our way to mention them ; but, during the stormy period we have passed through, the republic of Venice, and the three little commercial states of Gaeta, Naples, and Amalfi, had gradually grown up in independence and consequence. At the commencement of the Carlovigian dynasty, Venice and Amalfi kept up the commercial intercourse of Christendom with the countries of the East, which they alone continued to do until the time of the first crusade.\* The kingdom of the Franks, the duchy of the Lombards, were great states ; the Greeks still retained considerable possessions in the Calabrias and in Apulia ; but it was the miniature republics we have named that, by cultivating trade, laid the foundation of other laws and rights than those of the devastating sword.

788.—Adelchi, the Lombard prince, was killed in battle.

791.—The city of Rome suffered immense damages from the overflowing of the Tiber. The ancient Flaminian gate and the bridge of Antoninus were washed away.

800.—Charlemagne was again in Italy. He reconciled the Pope and the Romans ; and on Christmas day, and in the Church of the Vatican, in the presence of the Roman clergy and people, Leo III., as Charlemagne was about to retire, placed on his head a crown of gold, at which all present shouted, as had been the wont at the succession or creation of Emperors :—"To Charles,

the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, great and pacific Emperor, life and victory !" From this date Charlemagne changed his style from the royal to the imperial, calling himself "Emperor of the Romans and Augustus."

801.—A tremendous earthquake ruined many cities of Italy.

802.—Venice was much agitated about the choice of a certain bishop. The Doge Giovanni and his son Maurizio threw the Patriarch of Grado, their spiritual superior, from the top of a lofty tower, whither he had fled for refuge.

804.—About this time the Doges of Venice began to coin money. The republic was split by violent dissensions. One party appealed to the Greeks, the other to the Franks : both were guilty of the fault of putting in peril the independence of the little state.

810.—Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, attacked Venice. He seems to have taken several of the islands that form that singular city, but to have been repulsed with great loss at the Rialto. He returned to the continent, and died shortly after at Milan.

Venice was included in a treaty of Peace made this same year between Charlemagne and the Greek emperor, but the Venetians obliged themselves to pay henceforth an annual tribute to the kings of Italy.

814.—Charlemagne died at Aix-la-Chapelle, and was succeeded as Emperor by Louis the Pious, his only surviving legitimate son. Bernardo, a natural son of Pepin, was King of Italy.

819.—Lothaire, the son of Louis the Pious, was associated with his father in the empire, and declared King of Italy.

830.—The sons of Louis the Pious broke out into open rebellion ; and Lothaire, returning from Italy into France, distinguished himself by his cruelty, and endeavoured to force his father the Emperor to become a monk.

833.—The Saracens from Sicily ravaged the coasts of Italy, threatening the cities of Porto and Ostia by the mouth of the Tiber, and even Rome herself.

The unnatural contest of children against their father was again renewed. Lothaire went into France from Italy, carrying with him the Pope, to act as umpire. The spot where the conferences were held was afterwards called "The field of lies."

834.—The brothers quarrelled among themselves, and Louis and Pepin liberated their father, who was harshly kept a prisoner by Lothaire. Towards the end of the year a pacification took place, and Lothaire returned into Italy, which for some years might be considered as entirely separated from the empire.

839.—Pietro, the Doge of Venice, proceeded with a numerous fleet against the Slavonians, who occupied Dalmatia, and infested as cruel pirates the Adriatic and neighbouring seas. A treaty was made, and at the islands of Narenta, Drosaco, the Slavonian prince, confirmed it : they were to renounce for ever their piratical mode of life. It was not likely that a written treaty should effect so great a reformation, and we afterwards hear of these marauders ;

but it is pleasant to see Venice, in her infancy, attempting to establish some of the rights of humanity and civilization.

In this or the following year, the Venetians sent sixty ships of war to the relief of Taranto, that was beset by the Saracens.

840.—Louis, Emperor of the West, died.

During the unnatural dissensions of Charlemagne's descendants, and whilst Lothaire was seeking to extend his dominions, Italy, the fairest he might ever hope to possess, was continually ravaged in her southern provinces by the Saracens, who but too frequently were invited and subsidized by the inferior princes at war with each other. "And thus the infidels continued to profit by the discord of Christian princes, to the ruin of their innocent people."\*

\* Muratori. Bossi.







## The Pope's Daughter.

Non la connobbe 'l mondo mentre che l' ebbe.

PETRARCA.

But she I mean, is promised by her friends  
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth ;  
And kept securely from resort of men.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE Saracens, animated with the wild enthusiasm of a novel and intolerant faith, which blessed the sabre of the victor, had advanced in a rapid career of conquest, and, at one time, the apprehensions that all Europe would be submitted to them and the Koran were not altogether unreasonable.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, when the splendid heritage of Charlemagne was governed by weak princes divided against themselves, the infidels insulted not only the Italian, but all the line of coast on the Mediterranean occupied by Christians—frequently penetrating far into the interior of those countries, and at times seizing and retaining strong places. Many of the islands that speck and adorn the inland sea were in their possession, and from Sicily the Saracens would attack the Calabrias and the shores of what is now the Neapolitan kingdom with great effect. An expedition, more than usually strong and well appointed, sailed from Sicily to take possession of Ponza, Ventoteno, Ischia, and other islands situated between the mouth of the river Tiber and the gulf of Naples. It failed in its object: but a strong castle at the head of the Neapolitan bay fell into their hands, and offered an admirable point whence to prosecute their predatory incursions. This fortress stood on the Cape of Misenum, whose scenic beauty will not be easily forgotten by those who have sailed round it, or gazed on its abrupt cliffs from Baiæ, or Puteoli; and the castle itself might have pretended to some interest, being that in which Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, had passed the years of captivity that intervened between the throne and the grave. The sweeping invasions made from this and other points, and the ravages committed throughout the South of Italy by the barbarous Saracens, became so tremendous, that at length all the efforts of the Pope and Louis II., who then held the imperial sceptre, were united to make head against them. The Emperor, who was in Italy, and in the duchy of Benevento, summoned his Italian subjects of every degree, and from every part of the peninsula, to join his standard before Luceria, a strong city in Apulia. This rigorous edict was given as if for a holy war, which that might justly be deemed, whose object was the expulsion of the Saracens; but it contained a singular measure, or standard, of property and faculty.\* No person who possessed

\* “Qualunque persona che tanto possedesse in beni mobili di poter pagare la multa di un omicidio, (singolare misura delle facoltà) era tenuta a recarsi all’armata.”—Bossi, *Storia d’Italia Antic. e Mod.* lib. iv. cap. 6.

in moveable property the value of the fine fixed by law for a homicide could be exempted from the conscription ! (The price of a human life in those days I do not find mentioned.) Every marquis and count—which titles originally implied military grades and command—was to march with his troops, under penalty of the confiscation of his estates ; the gastaldi, or chatelains, were similarly bound ; and even the abbots and abbesses were menaced with immediate degradation from their high offices, if they sent not their full quota of vassals to the Imperial army. The force thus raised, though numerically great, was of dubious quality, and, except in the inhabitants of the districts most exposed to the Saracens, there was perhaps little of the daring spirit of patriotism, which in some instances may supply the deficiencies of military science and discipline.

The ashes of the ancient Romans in their sepulchral urns might have felt a chill colder than that of death as the parody of a Roman army assembled within the degraded walls of the eternal city. The superstitions of the age, the vast tendency to monachism, and a cumbrous hierarchy, had rendered prominent in the wasted population of Rome a mass of dreaming cenobites and pusillanimous priests. To make up her quota for the Christian army about to war on the Saracens, it was necessary to draw on these unwarlike classes, and cowls and scapularies marched in the ranks, mixed with steel casques and breast-plates. Yet were there some among the Romans of whom the ancient legions need not have been ashamed ; their barons, whose audacity and untractableness were to be better known at a somewhat later period, were fierce and brave ; and the plebeian population of the "Trastevere" might have offered then, as it does now, figures and countenances to recall the idea of their ancestors, the conquerors of the world. But among the Romans who obeyed the summons of the Emperor Louis, there was not a man so gallant and noble as the young warrior Lamberto, whose illustrious birth was the least of his qualities. He had not hesitated a moment to take up arms, though hesitation might almost have been excused in him, as, on reception of the imperial edict, he was betrothed, and on

the eve of being united to the fairest daughter of Rome—youthful, ingenuous, and passionately attached to her lover. He had affectionately striven to reconcile his young mistress to this award of fate, and now stood, though with feelings less firm than he might have desired, by her side on a terrace that overlooked the Tiber, to take his last farewell. The fond and gentle Stefania listened to his often-repeated assurances of constancy and love, and to his confident hopes that victory would soon restore him to Rome and to her; yet she wept as she had done before—and as the fatal moment for their parting approached, she again intreated him to avail himself of the facilities his rank and position afforded him, and not repair to the cruel and distant fields, whence he might never return. Lamberto, as he felt the balmy breath that came with her hurried words, and watched her tears, so “too convincing, dangerously dear,” in the eyes of woman, almost regretted he had stolen this interview; and even then, if her beauty and tenderness had taken the sword from his side, the warrior might have reprehended, but the lover would have excused him—

“Non era il volto suo cosa mortale,  
Ma d’angelica forma; e le parole  
Sonavan altro, che pur voce umana.”\*

The beauty, too, of the scenery, softened by the approach of evening, and the flowing river and vesper breeze, and the numerous voices of summer birds in the brake beyond the Tiber, all seemed to unite supplications with the pale and weeping Stefania, and to woo him to tranquillity and love. Lamberto was almost yielding to these winning influences, when the impatient neighing of his war-horse, that he had secured at the foot of the terrace, recalled him to himself and his duties.

“I must go, my Stefania,” said he after an effort. “But do not weep thus. Again I tell you, I shall soon return.”

“Alas!” replied the maid, “the sword of the cruel Saracen—fire—sickness from the unhealthy field—may each and all interfere with the keeping of this promise.”

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\* Petrarca.

"Nay, do not fear! Our cause is just—the necessity for rising in the defence of Christian Italy against the Pagans is imperious. Religion and humanity bless our arms, and God and the saints will protect the soldiers of St. Peter!" said the young warrior.

"But to what distant regions may not the Emperor lead you? How long, how very long may it be ere I shall see you again!" sighed Stefania.

"The edict is but for the defence of Italy; I shall neither cross the Alps nor the seas," replied Lamberto; "and should the war be prolonged on our own coasts, I have permission and the power to return and fulfil my dear engagements."

"Alas, alas!" said the weeping bride; "my heart dies within me—I have the presentiment, that on your leaving me, I shall be left defenceless and helpless to some horrid misfortune; and yet I feel, could such things be, that I have the courage to follow you to the field, and to share in every danger that may arise."

"My sweet, my generous Stefania! fear not for me, but still less for yourself! Protected as you are, what can harm you?"

"And yet I do fear," said the maiden, trembling, "and feel, I know not wherefore, that should the fury of the war spare you, I shall not live to welcome your return."

Though Lamberto shuddered at the supposition, he said encouragingly, "My Stefania, this is but the depression of your spirits, or the haunting of some dream; and your nurse there, who impatient at this long farewell taking, will inform you that dreams are to be interpreted into the very reverse of what they shadow forth."

"So may mine prove!" said the maiden, and, averting her face to hide a fresh torrent of tears, she presented her hand, and murmured a sad and almost inaudible adieu to her lover. Lamberto pressed her hand to his bosom and his lips, and repeating a farewell as tender as her own, rushed, while his resolution lasted, from the terrace, and, mounting his steed, galloped towards his troop.

By daybreak the following morning the Roman forces had all assembled before the Vatican, situated beyond the then existing walls of the city, and the rays of the rising sun shone on such a

military array as had not been seen there for a long time. The echoes of the Seven Hills were awakened by the blasts of the martial trumpet, and the genius of old Rome might have looked down with some degree of complacency, as this effort was at least to be directed against a foreign and a barbarous enemy, and not expended, as so many had been, in internal broils and self-destruction.

The *armigeri*, or body-guards of the great counts and nobles, accustomed to arms and a species of discipline, bore a good military appearance. They were chiefly on horseback. But the gathering of vassals, lay and ecclesiastic, could pretend to nothing of the sort. Their weapons were of almost every possible variety, but the short, firm sword of the ancient Romans was scarcely seen among them, and the organization of the legion, which had rendered infantry so redoubtable, was utterly unknown, though the works of Polybius remained to detail its secrets and effect. The Imperial banner floated in the van; but the Pope's colours, with the keys of Saint Peter, (which in a few ages, surmounted by the tiara, was to assert a superiority over the insignia of all the temporal sovereigns of the earth,) were modestly unfolded in the rear of the army. When every thing was ready for departure, Pope Adrian, attended by his cardinals, who were not yet proud princes of the Holy See, but simply priests of the parochial churches of Rome, or deacons,\* came forth in simple stole, and a humble mitre on his head, from the temple where he had celebrated mass, and, standing in the front of the portico, waved his hand, and blessed the troops, who knelt at his benediction. Religion infused for the time a spirit that was wanting: the Roman levies then marched with something like enthusiasm,—those being the boldest who had a bond of security on fate, in the possession of the

\* Chiamavansi allora, Cardinali in Roma, quei, che erano veri e proprj Parrochi di qualche chiesa Parrocchiale, o Diaconi, cioè veri e proprj Rettori di qualche Diaconia, o sia Spedale." . . . . "Lo stesso si trova praticato in Ravenna, in Milano, in Napoli, ed in altre città. Ma anche allora in gran riputazione e stima erano i Parrochi e Diaconi di Roma, perchè principali ad eleggere il Papa, e massimamente perchè i Papi per lo più si eleggevano dal corpo d' essi Parrochi e Diaconi."—Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 853.

efficacious relic of some saint, or a sword or spear that had been rubbed against the treasured steel that wounded the side of our Saviour.

In the evening after the marching of the troops, and about an hour after the "Ave Maria," an ecclesiastic, mounted on a mule and followed only by one attendant, was seen riding slowly along the banks of the Tiber. He alighted by the terrace which had been the scene of Lamberto's fond adieux, and thence entered a large and solitary house, where in a moment the lovely and sorrowing Stefania was in the affectionate arms of her father, for such was the visitor—and the visitor was Pope Adrian himself!

Catholics may be scandalized; but it is an historical and notorious fact, that though celibacy was recommended, it was not absolutely insisted upon as essential to the clerical profession, and a dogma of the infallible church, until the twelfth century; and in earlier ages many of the most distinguished bishops—nay, some of the popes themselves—had been married men before they renounced the world for the ecclesiastical life. Even thus had it happened with Adrian II.\* He had a wife named Stefania, and a family, of whom an only daughter now remained, before he entered the church; and even when his sanctity or his ambition was rewarded with its supreme post, he could not eradicate the private feelings of nature, (a Protestant may regret that the attempt were ever made,) but he continued to love his child with intense and absorbing affection. In what relation the Pope stood to his ex-wife we are not informed, but she lived with her daughter in the outskirts of Rome, and must occasionally have seen her husband in his visits, which were always made as privately as possible. To establish his darling child had been his principal care. When elected to the chair of Saint Peter, he found no difficulty in contracting an alliance with the noblest of Rome, and the gallant Lamberto was the husband he chose for Stefania. He had seen the youth's departure, which he could not well oppose, with regret, and he now came to

\* *Annales Francor. Bertiniani.* Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 868. Bossi, &c., &c. Though the chronicler Bertin, or Bertino, was a Catholic saint, he does not, in recording this marriage, express any horror.

console his child, who hung on his neck and wept. Her revered father's caresses, his encouragement, and affectionate admonitions, soon however restored the young bride to calmness, and to the sense of what she owed her kind parent. She exerted herself to please him—the hour passed, and when the fond father, charmed with her filial love and docility, took his leave, he promised that Lamberto should soon return from the wars.

The quick intercourse by letters—that admirable improvement of modern times that does so much for our comfort, and may alleviate the pangs of lovers' separation—was unknown in those days of turbulence and general ignorance. Lamberto had been absent many weeks, and his bride had never heard from him, when, one morning as she was walking on the terrace with her nurse, she saw a distant horseman galloping towards her solitary abode. He came on with such speed that she could soon perceive he was a warrior, and one of superior condition. Her heart beat wildly. About the length of a couple of bow-shots from the garden walls the road or path divided—one arm branching off towards the Campagna di Roma, and the other leading to the front entrance of her house. She was breathless as the warrior approached the division :—which road would he take? His gallant steed soon answered the question—he took the way to her door, and the over-agitated Stefania fell into the arms of her nurse, exclaiming, “It is he!—he is come at last!”

Soon, however, recovering herself, the young bride ran with love's speed to the house and the outer gate, where the domestics were holding parley with the armed visitor, who announced himself not indeed as Lamberto, but as the bearer of an important message from him. This was a cruel disappointment; but the minor pleasure of learning his tidings remained, and impatient, and without consulting her mother, she ordered that the gate, never unbarred in those times of treachery and violence, without suspicion, should be opened to the stranger. The warrior entered, and followed Stefania to the apartment of her mother, whom they found engaged in prayer. Startled at the intrusion, the matron arose.



"A messenger, dearest mother, from Lamberto," said Stefania, presenting the stranger, who respectfully bowed, and advancing produced to the ladies a curious ring, well known to both as having been worn by the absent bridegroom.

"By this token I am accredited," said the warrior.

"You are—it is Lamberto's ring!" cried Stefania, pressing it to her lips; "but wherefore tarries he so long?—where is he?—how fares he?—what says my lord?"

"Lamberto is well—his sword is victorious—he tenderly salutes you with the information, that in a few days, whatever be the consequences, he will quit the Emperor's camp and return to Rome to claim his bride and celebrate his nuptials," replied the envoy.

"Heaven be praised for his well-being!" exclaimed Stefania and her mother; but the latter added, "But may there not be dishonour or peril in abandoning the Christian army?"

"There may indeed be suspicion of one, and risk of the other," said the stranger cautiously; "and for this he exacts from you a promise, that no mention be made to living soul of his coming. When here, he can justify and defend himself."

"His will shall be done, and may all tend to the best!" said the matron.

"You promise, then, to keep this important secret?" rejoined the messenger.

The mother and daughter replied, "We do, most solemnly!"

After having answered a number of questions concerning Lamberto, suggested by the affection of the gentle Stefania, the warrior withdrew to partake of some refreshments prepared for him; and soon after, having paid his devoirs to the ladies, he left the house.

That very evening the quiet mule of the Roman Pontiff stopped before the door which led to her who was more precious than aught else on earth, and, in the indulgence of his parental tenderness, Adrian experienced that degree of pleasure which nothing could equal. It was a curious and a touching sight to mark the Pope and the maiden. The whole Christian world were his

children ; but he felt this to be a spiritual fiction, and the voice of nature within him told he had but *one child*—his own, and the fairest and dearest. The maiden, too, had been taught to consider the papal dignity as something above earth—allied to Heaven and the host of saints—but his familiar tenderness, and her filial return, assured her, that though now a Pope, her father was yet a mortal, and retained all his former feelings and affections.

Mindful of their promise, and fearful of trusting themselves on the subject of Lamberto's messenger, for truth will break out so naturally from ingenuous minds, neither Stefania nor her mother mentioned his visit, and Adrian returned to Rome without knowing anything of the matter.

Meanwhile the impatience of the bride, irritated by the assurance she had received that Lamberto would soon be with her, scarcely allowed her rest by night or day. The third—the fourth day had elapsed, and she began to feel that sickness of the heart which proceeds from delayed hope. On the evening of the fifth day, after having walked on the terrace, and watched with eager eyes across the country, until, overcome with fatigue, she was following her nurse, who had retired to the house for vesper prayers, a gentle “Hist, hist !” and her name repeated in a subdued voice arrested her steps. She turned in the direction of the sounds, and saw in the garden below the terrace an old gardener, who beckoned her to descend. Surprised at so unusual an invitation, she however went down to the garden by a flight of steps that led from the end of the terrace. The gardener, instead of waiting her approach, walked on towards the high walls that surrounded the grounds, nor stopped until he reached a cluster of trees that shut out all view from the house. Stefania followed him ; but what was her alarm, when, on reaching the spot where he had paused, she found a man in armour standing in the dense shadow of the trees. A scream died on her lips, but she would have fled, when the warrior, grasping her arm, made himself known as the messenger of Lamberto.

“Lady, you must excuse the means we have employed, and be silent,” said the man.

"But what means this?" asked Stefania, recovering her breath—"how are you here in secret?—where is my Lamberto?"

"A very short distance hence, impatiently awaiting your arrival," was the answer.

"How is this, sir!" said Stefania; "even at the hour of the day it is, the doors of this house are open to my affianced—why comes he then by stealth?"

"Alas! lady, things are changed, fearfully changed! Lamberto has incurred the displeasure of the Emperor and of his Holiness the Pope—your marriage is forbidden, and another destiny and another husband await you."

"Lamberto is my affianced—our vows have been plighted, and I will have no husband but him," said Stefania energetically, although trembling in every limb and joint at so horrid and so unexpected an announcement.

"He expected no less from you, lady, and thus has dared to oppose to force and violence, that may soon be employed against him and you, the resources of ingenuity and secresy. He expects your coming at a house not far removed from these garden walls, and a holy friar is with him to perform the marriage ceremony."

"So suddenly—so mysteriously!" mused Stefania.

"None other way is left, lady: when once married—once his—neither Emperor nor Pope will separate you; but *now* it is for you to decide, and that instantly, for every moment may render impracticable his well-laid plan, whether you will be his, or lose Lamberto for ever."

"I cannot lose him! I dare not flee to him thus! Alas, alas! and if I stay here I may never see him more!" cried the agitated bride.

"Of a certainty you never will! But why hesitate, fair lady, and throw away your only chance of love and happiness? Away, away with me, and in a few minutes you will be in the arms of an adoring husband!" and the secret envoy gently pulled her, but half unwilling as she was, towards the garden wall.

"But my father—my affectionate father!" cried Stefania with

anguish—"and my fond mother within !—Oh ! I cannot leave my darling mother thus !"

"It is impossible she can accompany you ; but each instant your escape to Lamberto may be prevented, and he has sworn by every oath not to survive the disappointment of this his last and only hope."

"Oh, I must consult my mother ! I cannot depart without her blessing," said Stefania, while tears rained down her youthful cheeks.

"This would ruin all ;" and the messenger, continuing his gentle force, brought her to the foot of the lofty wall. They had not stood there an instant, when the voice of the old nurse on the terrace was heard calling the name of Stefania.

"Oh, let me return ? let me return !" prayed the lovely maiden to the soldier, who now held her arm faster than before.

"And lose Lamberto for ever ?" whispered the man significantly—"No ! it must not be, and I must serve my friend and master.—Hist ! there Barnabo !"

At his call the old gardener glided between them and the wall, and opened a low iron door that gave egress to the banks of the Tiber. The warrior clasped Stefania in his arms—in two strides he was beyond the garden walls—the iron door was closed, and this half-voluntary elopement, half-forcible abduction was completed. Stephania wept and wrung her hands—she could not return, nor could she walk forward. The warrior took her light weight in his muscular arms, and carried her down to the edge of the river ; but before he could place her in a boat prepared for their flight, she had fainted.

When she recovered, as if from a confused dream, she found herself gliding rapidly between the dark rough banks of the Tiber, with the armed man by her side. She hid her face in her hands, and had only strength to say, "Oh, whither are you conducting me on this cold, deep river ?"

"To a husband," was the brief reply.

The boat soon stopped at an ancient quay, now much dilapidated, where Stefania was made to descend. Not a hundred yards

from the landing-place, a massive time-worn edifice reared its head in the uncertain and darkening twilight.

"Your husband awaits you there," said the warrior; "that is to be your temple of hymen!"

"Alas!" said Stefania, "it looks more like a tomb!"

But at the same the thoughts of her near approach to Lamberto, and her ardent love, whispered encouragement, and she walked on towards the dreary pile. The building, both in material and style of architecture, was such as had never been produced in the ages of barbarism; it was the ruin of an edifice, probably a temple, of the Roman empire, which, like many others, had been converted into a mortal residence. Within these old impenetrable walls the barons and nobles, even for some centuries after, set the Popes and the oppressed Romans at defiance, and the relics of a classical age served as the castles of feudal tyranny and its worst excesses. Stefania trembled with awe as she stopped under its frowning walls, from whose fractured and irregular edges the dark ivy descended in long broad threads, not adhesive to the masonry, but loose, and waving in the night-breeze like the banners of death. She looked in vain for a door to open, with a passionate, fond welcome from Lamberto. There was no door in the lower part of the edifice; but anon, after a shrill whistle from her conductor, she heard a harsh, creaking noise high above head, and looking up, she saw a narrow arched aperture in the wall thrown open. The light of torches glared through the opening, and she heard the harsh voices of several men. The next minute a folding flight of wooden steps, scarcely more convenient than a scaling ladder, was lowered. Agitated by a thousand contrasting passions, and with a giddy head, Stefania could not ascend by such steps as those, and her conductor carried her up in his arms. She landed in a narrow passage that penetrated the stupendous thickness of the wall, and opened into a vast roofless corridor where the wind caused the torches by which she was preceded to waver and flicker with strange effect, while at the same time their light disturbed innumerable tenants of the ruins, the owls and the bats, that moped and hooted, and flitted with wings mysteriously silent along and across the corridor. And where was

Lamberto all this time? Was it thus he received his bride, who had abandoned her home, and all in the world beside, to attend his summons? It was for him to support her trembling steps.

Her conductor assured her he was engaged with the priest, and that she would instantly be in his company. He threw open a door at the end of the gallery; but on following him into another passage, Stefania suddenly stopped, and drawing her hands before her eyes, uttered a faint scream. Against the wall she saw by a faulty light, a tall white figure, with a hand upraised as if to menace or admonish, and to her agitated senses it assumed the form of her mother—of that affectionate mother she had abandoned so precipitately.

“What fear is this? It is but a statue you start at,” said her conductor, and he ordered the attendants to hold their torches to a niche, where indeed was collocated an effigy of some divinity of ancient mythology.

The passage they were in descended considerably like the *vomitoria* of an ancient amphitheatre, and ended at another door, which being thrown open, Stephania found herself in a vast and lofty hall, whose obscurity was but imperfectly dissipated by torches stuck against the blackened walls, and a huge lamp suspended from the almost invisible roof. Beneath that lamp she saw the figures of a monk and a warrior clad in armour; and how did Stefania's cheek blush and her limbs shake when the latter advanced to meet her, saying in a low voice, “You are come at last?” She could not raise her eyes to his, but took his offered arm in silence. The warrior too was silent. When at the end of the dreary hall, and beneath the lamp, he made a sign to the monk, who instantly, and with a hurried voice, began to read the marriage service as prescribed at that period by the Church of Rome. As it proceeded and came to that point where Stefania was to give the important response that bound her fate till death, she lifted up her timid eyes towards her lover's face, but it was concealed by the casque and visor he wore. With something colder and heavier than steel at her heart, she again bent her eyes to the ground, wondering (if any of her confused ideas were intelligible) at the discourtesy and churlishness of her Lamberto. The ceremony was finished—she

scarcely knew how—the monk departed—the hall was cleared, and Stefania, blushing and trembling, was alone with her husband, who at last removing his masking helmet, discovered to her eyes not the beloved features of her Lamberto, but those of an utter stranger !

The betrayed girl shrieked with horror, and fell lifeless on the floor of the accursed hall.

We must leave the innocent victim in that den of treachery and horror, and explain the circumstances which led to her abduction—facts than which the dark, guilty period we are describing exhibits none more iniquitous.

Anastasius, the priest-cardinal, who bore the title of Saint Marcellus, descended from one of the richest and most noble families of Rome. His life was irregular and dissipated, but his heart was ambitious, and had no gentle feeling to interfere with the commission of any crime that might tend to the desired end.

Fifteen years before the date of the present narrative, in a council of the Church held at Rome, and presided by the zealous Pope Leo IV., he was excommunicated and deposed for non-residence and other ecclesiastical infractions. In spite, however, of this degradation, his power and influence in Rome were so great, that two years after, on the death of Leo, he was elected Pope by a strong faction of the Romans, while a more legitimate election had deferred the tiara to Benedict III. Whatever were the subsequent independence and pretensions of the Roman Conclave, it is certain that at this period the Pope elected at Rome was not consecrated or acknowledged as such, until the consent of the Emperor, the temporal sovereign, was obtained. The dignitaries chosen by Benedict, on this occasion, to carry the act of election to the Emperor for confirmation, were Nicholas, the Bishop of Anagni, and Mercurius, the master of the militia, both of whom being corrupted and won over by Anastasius, on presenting themselves at the Imperial Court, instead of promoting the interests of Benedict, pleaded in favour of the usurper. Nor did the ambitious priest's influence and manœuvres end there ; for, on the approach of the Emperor's messengers, (sent to investigate the election,)

they were met by some of the principal nobles of Rome, the zealous partisans of Anastasius, and at the gates of the city two powerful bishops joined their advocacy on his behalf. On the other side two bishops, deputed to meet the Imperial envoys by Benedict, were detained by them and consigned to military guard.

The following day the Imperial ministers ordered that the clergy, the senate, and the Roman people should meet them at Ponte Molle, to hear the high will of the Emperor Louis. It was, that Anastasius should be Pope ! Thus protected, the usurper entered the Vatican, and presently after occupied the Lateran Palace, where he tore the pontifical robes from Benedict, whom, after the harshest treatment and even blows, he condemned to confinement. "Then were incredible the lamentations and the tears of the clergy and the people, who on the next day assembled in the church of Saint Emilian, where repaired also with great haughtiness the Imperial ministers, accompanied by a strong body of soldiers, hoping to induce them to confirm the above-mentioned and iniquitous Anastasius. But they found in the bishops particularly, and then in the rest of the clergy and in the people, such constancy that day and the following one, all crying that they would have Benedict, and were ready to die rather than accept the unworthy personage proposed to them, that the officers of the Emperor accorded in their sentiment, and having driven Anastasius out of the palace, restored Benedict to liberty."\*

The Popes seem to have felt and resented injuries as much as other men ; from Benedict Anastasius could expect no grace, and he remained under the ban of the Church during the dominion of Benedict's successor, Nicholas. But on the accession of Adrian II., the father of Stefania, that benign pontiff, eager to reconcile and to forgive, withdrew the sentence of excommunication, and at the very commencement of his pontificate restored Anastasius to all his dignities. Such favours as these might have secured the gratitude of any man less perverse in crime than Anastasius ; but it is the property of some villains to convert



favours into humiliations, and to follow with a proud hate the givers of them. This did the rancorous priest. Anastasius, moreover, was but too well disposed to envy and detest any occupant of the Papal throne, which had once been his, and from which he could not forget how he had been hurled. But beyond all this, and innate malignity, or the inclination for evil for evil's sake which is found in the bosom of some human fiends, there may have been other motives, such as the wealth of the Pope's only child, and the aggrandizement of his own family, or jealousy to Lamberto's, to actuate the abominable conduct of Anastasius. He had a brother named Eleutherius, and the layman was almost as great a villain as the priest ; for he had at once embraced a project of stealing away the lovely daughter of Adrian, the contracted bride of Lamberto, and marrying her by force or fraud. The execution of the enormity was not easy. Adrian kept his heart's jewel in a coffer it would be difficult to break. The suburban villa where she resided was as strong as a castle,—she was protected by numerous servants, and never went out ; but—

— “ Oh ! mischief ! thou art swift  
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men ! ”

When Lamberto departed for the army, a warrior, a man of lost fortunes, whom obligations and a participation in former guilt had made the slave of Eleutherius, followed him to the field to watch his motions, and procure, if possible, some signet or ring, which, backing a feigned message, might gain him admission into the house of Stefania, and time to observe it and corrupt some menial. The long-worn and well-known ring of Lamberto was at last purloined : the emissary repaired to Rome, and we have seen how well his arts succeeded with the youthful, innocent, and unsuspecting Stefania.

The bloody Saracens at his palace gates, or before the altar of the Vatican,—an anti-pope with furious and overpowering partisans—a thunderbolt at his feet, could not have moved Pope Adrian as did the news of his daughter's disappearance. He too

well knew of what atrocities some in Rome were capable, and he tore his hoary beard and hair, and would not listen to advice or consolation. When the first paroxysms of his grief were over, he went to the fatal villa. The looks, the tones of voice of the bereaved father were dreadful when he addressed the less energetic but equally afflicted mother.

"Woman! is it thus you take care of my soul's idol? Where is my daughter? Where is my only child?" His wife hid her face in her hands and wept.

All the domestics were summoned and examined. The old nurse told the circumstances attending Stefania's disappearance, and added for her mistress, who dared not speak, an account of the visit of the warrior, and the surmise, the hope, that his daughter was with the returned Lamberto. From the loyalty of the young warrior,—from the utter uselessness of such a measure as elopement on his part, who could at any time claim his affianced bride, and from many other circumstances, Adrian knew this to be next to impossible. Yet he hastened to the palace of the young man's father. Lamberto had not returned,—had not been seen by the family, or any one in Rome.

The efforts used by the Pope to discover who were the ravishers of his daughter, soon made the atrocious affair known throughout the city; and as a great reward was offered to any one who could give even the slightest intelligence, an old fisherman hurried to present himself to Adrian. On the preceding evening, as he was mooring his skiff for the night at a spot somewhat lower down the Tiber, he saw a female figure, in white robes, land at the quay, and, struck at an unusual occurrence, he watched her to the walls of Eleutherius' stronghold. Here was some ground to go upon, and with the consciousness of his own charitableness, and the good he had done to Anastasius, Adrian summoned that prelate, confidently hoping that he would employ his best endeavours to induce his sinful brother, at least to restore the maiden he had stolen. The villain came but to revel in the spectacle of the affliction his iniquities had created. A false oath was a trifling

addition to the sum of his crimes, and he swore at once that he knew nothing of his brother's deeds, and would labour, if Stefania really were in his hands, to make him restore her to her father. He then retired, muttering as he passed through a crowd of priests and attendants in the anterooms of the Vatican, that it was unseemly and irreligious for the universal father of the Christian world so to occupy and humble himself about a stray lapwing of a girl. But the affections of Adrian met with more sympathy in other bosoms, and his beneficence had not always been thrown away, as on the incorrigible Anastasius. A few good friends, on learning the news brought by the fisherman, assembled in consultation, nor did they part until they had arranged a feasible scheme.

The exercise of the chase was indispensable to the existence of Eleutherius, and it was imagined that, even situated as he now was, he could not resist the temptation of one who should invite him to some extraordinary sport. Accordingly, on the second morning after his inglorious exploit, at a very early hour, when the vapours still hung over the river and the marshy plain, a peasant blew a hunter's horn at the foot of his castle walls, and gave a detailed account of such a congregation of wild boars in a neighbouring wood as had not been witnessed for years. There were at least a dozen patriarchs of the forest, each with tusks as long as the messenger's horn, and he could promise they would give gallant play to the Lord Eleutherius, whose arm alone was worthy of killing them. The bait took. He had been but too long already with a crazed, fever-burning girl, who had wildly rejected his love, and now was delirious :—it was a fine morning for the sport, the spot scarcely beyond the shadow of his own strong fortress ; for all events he had a body guard with whom few would cope ; so Eleutherius descended from his impenetrable abode with his suite, and followed the peasant. Their hasty and silent footsteps had crossed the verge of a little wood, when, as if by enchantment, every tree on the flanks, van, and rear, seemed to give birth to an armed man, with sword or spear pointed at the ravisher.

"There are your boars with their long tusks," cried the conductor, as he glided behind a protecting oak. "Now try your valorous arm on them as you may."

Eleutherius, foaming with rage, grasped his hunting spear with one hand, and drew his weighty broadsword with the other, but his followers did not show their wonted alacrity in following his example, as the force opposed to them evidently quadrupled their own numbers.

"Ha!" cried Eleutherius, "am I thus treacherously beset—betrayed?"

"And do you think that you alone are to employ false messengers?" said a warrior. "Is it for you, Sir, to talk of treachery—you who can betray a young and helpless woman?"

"But what would ye of me?"

"The instant restoration of the Pope's daughter," cried many voices together.

"That lady is my wife!—Ha! now tell me what right ye possess to interfere between us?"

"Mother Church denounces such marriages, and excommunicates those who perpetrate them. But we lose time!—Guards, seize this sacrilegious thief!" At the order of their leader, the armed men, advancing from the surrounding trees, contracted their circle, and some of the boldest rushed upon Eleutherius, who was presently disarmed and seized. At the furious voice of their chief, most of the villain's followers at last drew their swords, and seemed disposed to maintain a very unequal combat, which must have soon ended in their destruction.

"Put up your blades!" cried the warrior, who commanded the opposite party: "we have no quarrel with you, and would not shed your blood. Nor do we want aught with the traitor you serve but the restitution of the lady, the bride of another, whom he has stolen most foully!"

"Against him who moves a finger in so detestable a cause as that of the ravisher's," cried an ecclesiastic, who advanced with a crucifix in his hand, "the Holy Church will pronounce the direst of her anathemas."

His followers threw their swords to the ground, and twenty daggers were planted against the traitor's breast.

"Restore the Lady Stefania, or hie to hell, with all your guilt upon you!" exclaimed the leader, who brandished a broad poniard before his eyes.

"I know not your authority—but I cannot resist your force. What are the conditions of the surrender?" said Eleutherius, grinding his teeth.

"For you—life and liberty immediately that Stefania is in our hands. The benignant Adrian seeks but his daughter, and not your punishment, which he leaves to Heaven and your own conscience," replied the priest who had before spoken.

"If I give her up, I remain still in your power," said the villain, who had too often broken word and faith not to suspect others. What is the pledge you give for my safety?"

"The vow of a servant of Christ!" replied the priest, and he raised the silver crucifix he wore at his bosom to his lips.

"Then lead on to the castle, and take these daggers from my betrayed and unprotected person," said Eleutherius, in a tone of mingled ferocity, fear, and humiliation. The weapons were sheathed, and closely surrounding the captive, the partisans of the Pope marched towards the ruin. When the horn sounded beneath those gloomy walls, the consternation of its garrison was great to see their master a prisoner in the midst of an armed multitude; but they soon understood the cause of such an arrest, as Eleutherius ordered them to bring forth the captive lady.

"But my Lord—in the state she is in?" inquired one of the attendants in the fortress.

"Ay—so they will have it!" replied Eleutherius. "She must be carried. Away! let my bidding be obeyed instantly."

The men retired from the door-way, and shortly after fearful shrieks were heard echoing within the old building.

"They are murdering the Lady Stefania!" exclaimed the Romans, and again their swords and daggers were brandished. But the next moment the unfortunate victim was seen alive and struggling in the arms of an attendant.

The steps were lowered at the order of Eleutherius,—the maiden was carried down them, consigned to her deliverers, and in what a state ! A violent fever seemed to consume her ; her eyes glared with insanity ; she knew neither those who were her enemies, or those who were her friends, and she shrieked—piteously shrieked, that they should not kill her, but restore her to her mother. The general indignation was so excited by this atrocious spectacle, that twenty daggers or more were again at the ravisher's breast, and some would certainly have been gratified by a home-thrust, had not the priest waved his silver crucifix and said—"My sons ! I have sworn for the villain's safety."

"And now, I call upon you to keep your oath," cried the trembling miscreant.

"You are free !" replied the ecclesiastic,—"*free from all but your damning sins ! Go and repent of them !*"

With a smile of brutal scorn, Eleutherius withdrew, and, ascending the ladder, shut himself up in his lair.

The friends of Adrian made a sort of litter with their lances, and with all possible care carried his daughter into Rome, where the fond father's ecstasy at her recovery was checked by the condition in which he found her, and the reasonable fear that a crueller ravisher still than Eleutherius—that death would again deprive him of his darling, and for ever !

Contrary, however, to the most sanguine expectations, the lovely girl was in a few days restored to health and reason ; and Adrian, who could no longer suffer her to be out of his sight, lodged her with her mother, in a house near the Lateran Palace, his own residence.

Revenge, rage, the sense of humiliation received, and from which he could never escape either in his waking or his sleeping hours, waged dreadful war in the breast of Eleutherius, and other feelings equally intense in their nature predisposed him for the commission of fresh and darker crimes. He had entered into the atrocious plot entirely at his brother's instigation, or the suggestions of his own ambition or malignancy ; the person of the bride was an object as indifferent as unknown ; but now he had seen Stefania,

and his savage heart had felt her exquisite beauties. He loved her—but as a tiger loves !

His brother Anastasius, a demon in the garb of a man, and a churchman, was ever ready to fan the flames of his ire, and to urge him to the commission of deeds that nature might shudder over, but which would be sweet to him as tending to the ruin of his benefactor Pope Adrian. Well guarded, and in the city, where, in all classes, the admirers and friends of the Pontiff were predominant in number and influence, the traitor could not hope to succeed in again carrying off the person of Stefania, and every plot had failed, and added to his diabolical spite, when news was brought of the speedy return of part of the Roman army. \* \* \*

“It is even as they rumour,” said the Cardinal Anastasius to Eleutherius, who sat with lowering brows and with arms dejectedly crossed on his breast. “Lamberto will be in Rome before this moon ends, and, spite of her scapado, Stefania will be his wife !”

“Stefania !—she !—of that boy !” cried Eleutherius ferociously.

“Ay, his wife,” continued Anastasius, “and, if you are peaceable, you may witness the marriage festival, or hear at a distance the chant of Stefania’s epithalamium !”

“By my soul’s eternal perdition !” exclaimed Eleutherius, who had bitten his writhing lips until the blood flowed from them, “she shall not be his——” He could not add the hateful word.

“Wife !” rejoined Anastasius, who saw how he could work him up to madness.

“By hell ! she shall not !” shrieked the villain, and he arose from his seat and paced the room with steps like those of an exasperated tiger in his cage.

“I shall live to see the offspring of Lamberto the grandchildren of Adrian—curses on him !” said the Cardinal.

“Never !” raged Eleutherius, and he stopped opposite to his fiend-like brother, with an expression and bearing that showed he was prepared for the most infernal of his purposes.

“But, Eleutherius, what can now be done to prevent it? Even were you to carry off the girl again, all Rome—and the Emperor

Louis will be soon at home with an army—would fall upon you, and then——”

“Ay! what can be done? let me pause on that,” said the less atrocious of the atrocious brothers, and he was soon lost in gloomy abstractions.

“Were she removed—were she dead!” muttered Anastasius, after some minutes, in a very low tone, and as if communing merely with himself, “’twere better than to see her Lamberto’s wife.”

“What say you there, brother?” cried Eleutherius, with a start.

“I was only musing,” replied the Cardinal, with a collectedness of purpose and a degree of composure essentially infernal. “I was only considering to myself that death was the only preventive.”

“Ha! you opine well! it shall be done; the stripling Lamberto dies,” said Eleutherius, clenching his right hand.

“And live there no other youths in Rome fit and willing to supply his place, and marry the Pope’s daughter?” insidiously inquired Anastasius.

“Curses on them, they shall all fall! this hand has strength to smite each successive suitor.”

“Eleutherius, this would be long work; you may fall instead of a rival, and a rival live to enjoy your dainty bride. ’Twere a way over long, and——”

“Show me a shorter and a surer,” cried the maddened savage, “and at once I will take it!”

“Her death would settle all,” murmured the Cardinal, not as if answering his brother, but continuing his own musings.

“Her death—hers—whose death?”

“Stefania’s” whispered the Cardinal, raising his full eyes to his brother’s face.

“’Twas but last night, indeed, I dreamed I had slain her.”

“Well, ’twas easily done,” said the monster Anastasius, encouragingly,

“A blow; one blow! but——,” and Eleutherius shuddered through trunk and limb.

“But what?” inquired the Cardinal; “’twas all over then; and if she could not be your bride, she could be bride to no one else.”



"But I thought her dying eyes shot liquid fire into my heart—that the earth would not drink up her young crimson blood—that every drop as it fell, like the rods of the Egyptian necromancers, was converted into a serpent; and that each of the myriad, as they darted hissing before me, or crawled round my limbs with slimy and obscene embrace, had a thousand stings to sting me!"

"'Twas ~~but~~ an unreal dream," said the Cardinal; "but how will you bear the pangs of reality, when Lamberto——"



"Never! She shall die!" exclaimed Eleutherius, and he rushed at once from his brother's abode to execute his infernal purpose. By what means the monster gained admission into the well-guarded house it is not known; but as Stefania was sitting that evening in her mother's apartment, on a sudden, as if he had risen through

the earth, the murderer stood before her with a long dagger in his hand. The matron rushed with a dreadful scream between him and her lovely daughter, and received in her own bosom the monster's first blow. He seized the shrieking Stefania by the arm—the beauty of an angel only served to increase the atrocity of the fiend—he drove his reeking steel, reeking with her parent's blood, to her heart; and though, as in his dream, one blow was enough, he dealt another, and another, and another! nor did he quit the scene of his horrible butchery until he had brutally mutilated both daughter and mother.\*

In retiring from the house, the murderer, covered with blood, was seized by the officers of justice, from whom he in vain attempted to escape. He was there, in Rome, pinioned and loaded with chains, to answer for his crime with his life; but the lives of a thousand such as he could not have paid for that of his beautiful, innocent victim.

Whilst these tragical events were passing in Rome, Lamberto, in the camp of the Emperor, had indeed been preparing his return to his beloved bride; and he could undertake it with honour and favour, for the Emperor's campaign against the Saracens had been a successful one, and in every action the gallant young Roman had distinguished himself. At the sieges of Matera, Venosa, and Canusium, Lamberto's banner had been the first on the enemy's walls; and when Louis II. converted the siege of Bari into a blockade, the impatient lover left the army, and with a sufficient escort took the shortest road that led from the Apulian plain to the Campanian. He had toiled over the rough and lofty mountains of Capitanata and the Abruzzi, and with a cruel coincidence in date, looked from a ridge of the Apennines on Rome, his native place and the residence of his bride, the evening, and the very hour, that Eleutherius consummated his crime, and Stefania—the fair, the fond, who was to welcome his return, and reward his valour and his heart's affections—fell beneath the hand of an assassin.

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\* Annall, Francor, Bertiniani, Muratori, Bossi, &c., &c. The concise words of Muratori—"Ambedue più che barbaramente le scannò ed uccise,"—open to the imagination an ample field of horror.

With a silent but heart-eloquent thanksgiving to the God of battles, who had preserved him in so many perils for happiness like what was before him, and with a prayer that that bliss might endure and he be made worthy of its enjoyment, the ardent young man pressed the flanks of his tired steed, and cantered over the solitary flats towards Rome. But the voice of death met him at Rome's gates !

We have not had the heart to describe the woe of the bereaved father ; and we must bury the feelings of the maddened lover in the same silence. What satisfaction they could derive from the punishment of the murderer was soon theirs ; for, at the Emperor's command, Eleutherius was tried according to the Roman law, condemned, and executed by "*Missis Imperatoris*."\*

The Cardinal Anastasius had fled. It appeared on the trial that he had urged his brother to all his crimes ; and a council of the Church solemnly excommunicated him, until he should appear to render an account of what he was accused of ; but whether he was ever punished by mortal law, or left to a more awful and unavoidable retribution, is not recorded.

To the heart-stricken Lamberto, two ways of disposing of his weary life remained, and were prescribed and sanctioned by the spirit of the age : he could enter the monastic order, or he could devote himself to arms and incessant war against the enemies of Christianity and the despoilers of his country. He chose the latter and the nobler course ; and at the taking of Bari by the Emperor, a few months after, the scimitar of a Mahometan relieved him from the weight of existence.

\* "*Hadrianus Papa apud Imperatorem Missos obtinuit, qui præfatum Eleutherium secundum legem Romanam judicaret.*" Pagius ad *Annal. Baron.* "*Et à Missis Imperatoris occisus.*" Eutrop. Presb. *Langobardus de Imp. Rom.*



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### *Ninth and Tenth Centuries.*

FROM THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE FAT, THE LAST OF THE CARLOVINGIAN EMPERORS, TO THE ACCESSION OF OTHO THE GREAT.

888.—AT the death of Charles the Fat, that part of Italy which acknowledged the supremacy of the Western Empire was divided, like France and Germany, among a few powerful vassals, hereditary governors of provinces. The principal of these were the Dukes of Spoleto and Tuscany, the Marquises of Ivrea, Susa, and Friuli. The great Lombard Duchy of Benevento, which had stood against the arms of Charlemagne, and comprised more than half the present kingdom of Naples, had now fallen into decay, and was straitened by the Greeks in Apulia, and by the principalities of Capua and Salerno, which had been severed from its own territory, on the opposite coast. Though princes of the Carlovngian line continued to reign in France, their character was too little distinguished to challenge the obedience of Italy, already separated by family partitions from the transalpine nations ; and the only contest was among her native chiefs.\*

Among these chiefs, however, two aspired to the royal dignity—Berenger Duke of Friuli, and Guido Duke of Spoleto. The choice fell on the former, and Berenger dated his reign from the death of Charles the Fat, and styled himself King of Italy, though a considerable part of that country continued to be independent of, or hostile to him.

Muratori is of opinion that the celebrated “Iron Crown” of the Lombards preserved at Monza was first used at the coronation of Berenger.†

889.—Guido Duke of Spoleto, who had been defeated by Berenger in a former battle, now beat his rival ; and repairing to Pavia with a number of bishops, some of whom had *fought* in his ranks, he made them proclaim him King.

891.—Guido crowned as Emperor by Pope Stephen V. The Popes, who at first received their nomination from the Emperor, were now assuming the right

of naming the Emperors. Yet at this very time they could scarcely maintain their authority in Rome, where continual ruptures took place between the clergy and the people.

892.—Formoso, who had succeeded Pope Stephen V., invited the Germans to cross the Alps and deliver him from his tyrants, under which title were included the King Berenger and the Emperor Guido. The frequency of these fatal invitations justifies the melancholy assertion of Macchiavelli, that "all the wars made by the barbarians in Italy at this period were principally caused by the Popes; and all the barbarians that inundated that beautiful country were called thither by the Popes."

893.—King Berenger also implored the aid of Arnulph King of Germany, who sent him an army that did little good to his cause.

The following year, Arnulph descended into Italy with a powerful army. He took the city of Bergamo, which was valiantly defended; and the cruelties he committed there were so tremendous, that nearly all the cities of Lombardy and Tuscany at once submitted to him. He returned into Germany, and shortly after, death delivered Berenger of his rival Guido, who was however succeeded, at least in his title of Emperor, by his son Lamberto.

895.—The Pope Formoso again invited Arnulph into Italy, proposing to create him Emperor, to the exclusion of the young Lamberto, who had been recommended by his dying father to his (the Pope's) protection. The politics of the Court of Rome were, to prefer a foreign prince beyond the Alps, to a native sovereign who would live and rule in Italy, and check the growth of that temporal authority every successive pontiff aimed at.

896.—Arnulph took by assault the city of Rome, where the widow of Guido attempted to sustain the right of her son Lamberto. The fierce German was crowned Emperor, so that Italy at this period had two emperors and a king. There were moreover two popes—Formoso, and Sergius, whom he had displaced, but who still retained a formidable party. Arnulph, however, could not secure himself in Italy, and he recrossed the Alps, oppressed with sickness, and followed by the curses of the Italians.

898.—The young Emperor Lamberto was killed at Marengo (the scene of Bonaparte's splendid victory—in the middle ages a vast forest abounding in wild beasts, but now an open and cultivated plain) either by a fall from his horse or by the hand of an assassin. Thus Italy was freed of one of her sovereigns; and as Arnulph continued sick and inactive in Germany, Berenger the King may be considered as her monarch.

900.—Louis, the King of Provence, made a descent into Italy, but was fain to retire on a humiliating treaty. To this year is generally referred one of Italy's most dreadful calamities—the first incursion of the Hungarians.

The jealousies of the powerful Italian dukes and of the Pope prevented Berenger from establishing a unity of government. On the death of the Emperor Arnulph, Louis III. his son was proclaimed King of Italy. This Louis, as King of Provence, had already invaded Italy.

901.—Louis III. was crowned as Emperor at Rome, and part of Italy obeyed him, whilst another portion remained faithful to King Berenger.

902.—Berenger obliged the Emperor Louis again to leave Italy, with solemn oaths that he would never more return.

905.—Unmindful of his oaths, the Emperor Louis again invaded Italy. He was at first successful, and Berenger was obliged to abandon Italy, or to conceal himself for some time. But he came suddenly on Louis at Verona, made him his prisoner, and again sent him across the Alps—but this time without his eyes, which were torn out in his prison.

The Saracens established themselves on the river Garigliano, whence they infested the whole country.

Another host of Saracens from Spain committed dreadful havoc on the coasts of Provence and Liguria. They even penetrated inland as far as Turin, which city was however secure in its fortifications. The Italians, who were the first of the nations of Modern Europe to attend to the arts of military architecture, were now obliged, by these inroads of the Saracens and Hungarians, to cultivate it still farther.

906.—We find the Saracens occupying a place strongly fortified on the river Garigliano, (which they continued to hold for years,) whence they infested the surrounding country.

914.—Theodora, a noble Roman dame, whose vices were no obstacle to her ruling in Rome almost as a queen, caused a lover of hers to be elected Pope: this was John X.

916.—Berenger received the Imperial crown from the Pope.

921-2.—Adalbert, the Marquis of Ivrea, conspired against the Emperor Berenger, although married to his daughter, and with other nobles invited Rodolph King of Burgundy into Italy. Rodolph crossed the Alps, took Pavia, where he was elected and crowned as King of Italy by a powerful faction.

923.—The Emperor Berenger asserted his rights on the field. A bloody battle was fought near Fiorenzuola, the horrors of which were augmented by the facts, that, through the diversity of factions, the father was seen to bear arms against the son, the son against the father, brother against brother—as but too frequently has happened in the insane civil wars of Italy. Fortune was adverse to the Emperor, who fled to Verona, where he was treacherously assassinated the following year. But Rodolph's reign was short; for, in less than four years, the Pope and another faction successfully invited and aided Hugo Duke of Provence, who obtained and wore the crown of Italy for twenty-one years, during sixteen of which he shared it with his son Lothaire. Under the violence and perfidy of the tyrant Hugo, the Italians wept, as they deserved to do, the gentle government of the Emperor Berenger, whom they had capriciously expelled.

We should have slight inclination, even if our limits permitted, to dwell on the atrocities of these times—the cruelties of Hugo, and the intrigues of the infamous Marozia, daughter of the Roman dame Theodora (who, as we have

sten, actually made a pope). The tyrant had despoiled nearly every one of his great vassals, and meditated the ruin of Berenger Marquis of Ivrea, and grandson of the unfortunate Emperor of that name, when that young nobleman fled into Germany and supplicated the aid of Otho the First. In 945 the fugitive entered Italy, and, though but slightly succoured by Otho, found himself in a condition to claim the crown disgraced by the humiliated Hugo. The great feudatories however, finding themselves again of consequence, endeavoured to preserve their power—not by accepting one rival for another, but by deposing Hugo, electing his son Lothaire to the crown, and confiding the administration of the kingdom to Berenger—thus securing, as they thought, a certain dissension and weakness in the government, which must be favourable to their views of ambition or independence. The events that ensued are correctly detailed in the following narrative.

961.—Otho, having descended from the Alps a second time, deposed Berenger, and received at the hands of Pope John XII. the Imperial dignity, which had been suspended for *forty* years, counting from the fall of Berenger, the last Emperor proclaimed by the Popes.



## The Captive Queen.

\* \* \* \* \* Oscura tomba  
Sotto i miei passi si spalanca \* \* \* \* \* Ah! come  
Un nuovo gel freddo sul cuor mi piomba !  
Morte n' emerge ; ella mi chiama a nome :  
Ella si appressa, e a strascinar mi seco  
L' arida man m' implica fra le chiome.

IL MARCHESE GARGALLO.

————— "Of comfort no one speaks :  
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs !"

SHAKSPEARE.

THE desolating years for Italy that had revolved since the peaceful days when Virgil sang of the Mincius,\* and Catullus, with perhaps more feeling, launched his bark on the Benacus, had converted into solitudes the banks of that river and the shores of that lake ; and a vast extent of forest, unproductive to man save in the game with which it abounded, now belted the Lago di Garda. It was in this district, as morn rose calmly over the mountains, and the grey of dawn was gradually bursting into oriental light, that Azzo, the Lord of Canossa, repaired with a gallant band of friends and dependants to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. The place of rendezvous was gained as the full light of the risen sun dissipated the forest's gloom, which still, however, so thick and luxuriant was its foliage, retained a sort of twilight dimness and mysteriousness. The wide-spread

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\* See Geor. 2. v. 160. Æn. 10. v. 205.



contracting *cordon* had been formed by the serfs, and the proud cavaliers plunging into the thickets of the wood, the *battue* was commenced. "The contest incessantly going on between man and the inferior animals, for the possession of the earth," had here, as in so many other portions of the Roman Empire, been abandoned by the nobler combatant; consequently there was no lack of game. The thronging denizens of the wild wood, driven by the serfs into a circle that gradually contracted, offered at every minute an aim to the hunters, whose horns and joyous cries, prolonged by echoes still more exhilarating, resounded on every side. Yet was there one of the party who partook not in the general excitement, but, buried apparently in other and more weighty concerns, soon quitted the chase, and sought a solitary path that led from the sylvan depth of the hunting ground to the open shores of the broad blue lake. He proceeded slowly on, with his reins thrown on the neck of his docile courser. The deep thoughts that absorbed him made him all insensible to the objects by which he rode. These thoughts were not of a happy nature, for he sighed frequently, and unwittingly gave utterance to them at times in hurried, detached sentences. In this mode, without knowing it, he had exclaimed, "Yes, I may gain, but most assuredly I shall lose;" and the next instant, a person, in the garb of a Benedictine monk, crossed his path, repeating his words, "Yes, I may gain, but most assuredly I shall lose!" "Ha!" cried Azzo, spurring his horse towards the monk, who now had stopped under a tree, "who is it that echoes my thoughts?" "Why, by Saint Benedict!" replied the intruder, "your lordship hath become a learned clerk, and your thoughts are syllogisms that would puzzle our wisest heads; thank Heaven! my duty confines me to the recitation of the divine office at the choir; beyond which I know nothing, but that 'Jovis omnia plena.'" "You know more than this, friar, or how could you repeat my thoughts?" said Azzo, stooping over his horse's neck, and gazing with curiosity in the face of the stranger. "To repeat the thoughts of others, and often without understanding them, is said to be peculiarly the occupation of a monk's life," was the reply. "But are my thoughts inscribed on my face like

the words in an emblazoned missal or well-written chronicle," inquired the warrior, "that you can read them there and repeat them?" The monk smiled ere he replied, "I know your thoughts, both past and present!" "Ay," said Azzo, "then can you tell me in what direction they now run?" "Not northward," replied the monk archly; "not in the forest's depth, nor in the train of hounds and huntsmen; they set thitherward," and he pointed to the south.

That simple act caused the warrior to tremble in his saddle, and it was with an agitated and angry voice he demanded of the meddling monk what he meant. The Benedictine shook his ample robes around him and replied, "I may mean nothing! I love the warm South, and so *may you*, without having your taste called in question. The South is a genial, happy clime; its skies are cloudless, fertile its plains—its hills, whose feet are festooned with vines, are crowned with many a holy fane; and there, on Monte Cassino, did the sainted Benedict preside. Rome is holy; Naples a lovely, and somehow a safe refuge: hence, Sir Count, chose not the saint wisely in fixing his residence and his tomb between them?"

"I cannot read your riddles, or your holy legends, learned friar. I have no vocation for a saintship, and mine be a warrior's tomb," cried Azzo, impatiently; "but you evade me and tamper with perilous thoughts." He paused, and gazed scrutinizingly in the monk's face, which was almost as expressionless as the trunk of the gnarled oak against which he leaned, nor did his voice betray any agitation when he said, "Count Azzo seems strangely moved at my pointing to the southward of him: yet such an intimation might be vague. From the foot of the Alps, near which he rides, there is a broad and fair space to the southern extremity of Italy; and between the placid waters of the Benacus and the troubled waves of Scylla are hundreds of towns, thousands of villages and *castella*, and objects too numerous for human calculation. Now these are all to the south, and mayhap I cannot point unerringly to the identical spot on which his contemplations are riveted." The Count gave no rely. The monk continued: "For example, to return to the South—the warm, the genial South—whose very name gladdens my senses; here, now, as we stand, you are to the

south of me, that rock is to the south of you, Lake Benacus there is to the south of the rock ; and beyond it, on its steep shore, still farther south, I see a lonely tower !—eh ?” Azzo started like one whose soul’s secret had been discovered. “ Friar ! stranger, seer, or devil !” he exclaimed hurriedly, “ thou seemest acquainted with matters whereon my life—the life of one worth ten thousand lives like mine, depend ! Art thou to be trusted ? Say, who, what art thou ?” “ I am not all I seem—not always to be a stranger, if Count Azzo persevere in his present intentions ; and, though acquainted with sin, more of a seer than a devil,” said the monk, with provoking composure. “ Thou art informed of the dark mysteries of the present,” resumed the noble, after some meditation “ thou readest my secret thoughts as an open book on thy choir-desk, but, tell me, canst thou peruse the future—will success attend my enterprise ? Can my hand do what my heart desires ?” “ Quod volumus facile credimus,” replied the Benedictine, coolly, and he fixed his searching eyes on the varying countenance of Azzo, who presently added, “ Quod volumus facile credimus ! I am no clerk, but I understand as much Latin as that ; but your answer is only in reference to my hopes, and wishes, and belief. You banter me, wise brother. True, I believe my plans, or part of them, to be of easy execution ; but man is presumptuous, and a moment may defeat the plan of years ! I remember the past, I know the present, and you have detained my ear in vain if you tell me not of the future.” “ Then, Count Azzo, I *do* tell you, that your cause will triumph, and Queen Adelaide, the desolate captive, be again Queen—nay, Empress and mistress of fair Italy !” “ Heavens ! be careful how you breathe that name !” said the Count, with extreme agitation. “ I dread even to whisper it in this woodland solitude !” “ Fear not, generous soldier ! but now we must part,” said the Monk, drawing his garments closely round him ; “ we shall soon meet again, and then you shall know more of me !” “ I would fain have that knowledge now,” rejoined Azzo ; “ my fate, the Queen’s, and the fate of my friends, are in your hands ; can we depend upon you ?” “ I will answer that question in the turret cell of yonder solitary tower ; and now, Sir

Azzo, farewell!" And with these words the monk glided like a spectre from where he had been holding converse, into the thickest of the forest. "By my soul! I am wrong to let this man of mystery escape me thus," mused the astonished Count; "he may go at once to the court of the usurper, and Berenger's wrath is death. I will secure him here!"

He could not pass on horseback into the gloomy, low-branched avenue through which the stranger had disappeared; but dismounting, he pursued his way on foot, calling lustily on the friar to stop, as he had yet a question to ask him. The Monk was not to be seen; and though a not very distant voice made the silent wood ring with the joyous cry of "Long live Queen Adelaide!" the Count laboured after him in vain, and at length gave up the pursuit in despair. To retrace his steps was a work of some difficulty, as he had gone heedlessly far into the most intricate part of the wilderness; and when at last, worn out with fatigue, he regained the spot where his steed was tranquilly grazing, it was in no very good humour he mounted and took the way to his castle. As he would not in such a mood be a pleasant travelling companion, we will leave him to pursue his journey alone, and describe the causes of his uneasiness.

The name of Adelaide, the mention of which in the solitude of a forest caused Azzo to tremble, had been sung in courts and echoed by admiring nations. She was the daughter of a king,\* and a king's widow. At the early age of sixteen, as a pledge and an assurance of peace, she left the paternal court, and was married to Lothaire, the virtuous son of an iniquitous sire—of Hugo, the King of Italy. During the short life of Lothaire, he captivated the affections even of those who were irritated by his father's tyranny; and the daily practices of his life were such as almost to justify the superstition of the times, which attributed a prolongation of it to miraculous interference; for, previously to his marriage, when wasting with an incurable fever, he had recovered perfect health at the exposition of the body of Saint Colombano, in the

\* Rodolph, sovereign of Burgundy, was her father.

church of Saint Michael at Pavia. The meekness and humanity of the son, whenever they could be exercised, were counterpoises or correctives to the violence and cruelty of the father ; and when Berenger, Marquis of Ivrea, was detected in a plot to overthrow his government, and Hugo, who deceived him by a simulated pardon and expressions of tender friendship, had sent secret orders to seize the traitor and put out his eyes, Lothaire gave him timely warning and provided for his escape. When Hugo had completed his career of crimes,\* and the Italians could no longer tolerate his iniquities, the tyranny of his government, and his inordinate rapacity and total want of faith, the fugitive Marquis of Ivrea appeared in Italy, where he was hailed as a deliverer, to dispute the throne with the tyrant, who was speedily abandoned on all sides. Confident in the effect of virtues he himself had never practised, Hugo despatched his son to Milan to claim the crown of Italy, and then retreated across the Alps.

Lothaire appeared before the successful Berenger and the assembled people in the garb of a suppliant ; and so correctly had his father calculated, and so touched were the people at his handsome, youthful appearance, his humility, and the remembrance of his many virtues, that with enthusiasm they raised him from the cross before which he had prostrated himself, and with one accord proclaimed him their King. Berenger concealed his ambitious projects in a ready acquiescence, and, acknowledging his benefactor as his King, contrived to retain everything of the kingly quality, save the name. But he could not rest here ; and after having, in a nominally subordinate situation, equalled the tyranny of Hugo, whom he had hurled from the throne, he completed his guilt by the most horrible ingratitude, in the murder of his son. The amiable and unsuspecting Lothaire was his guest in the Palace of Turin ; and the poisoned cup † is said to have been presented by Berenger himself, who,

\* See Bossi, *Storia d'Italia*, lib. iv. c. xii.

† The chronicler Frodoard asserts openly that Berenger poisoned Lothaire : and Liutprand, the secretary of Berenger, confirms the fact by saying that Lothaire, in saving Berenger's life (when detected in the conspiracy by Hugo), had lent a hand to his own death.

a few years before, had owed to him his eyes—perhaps his life. The monster ascended the throne, and endeavoured to persuade the widowed Adelaide to accept the hand of his son Adelbert; and when the virtuous and high-spirited woman rejected the proposal with indignation mixed with contempt and horror, he did not hesitate to recur to force. The Queen was shut up in a remote part of the Palace of Pavia, and for months subjected to the barbarous and unwearying persecutions of the usurper and his wife, Willa, a woman described as every way worthy of the bed of a traitor and murderer.

Rosvida, a nun and poetess of those days, recorded the woes of Lothaire's widow in Latin versés. According to this cotemporary authority, the flowing hair of the lovely Adelaide was torn from her head, her face and delicate body were disfigured with blows and kicks; she was denied the light of day, and had no attendant save a poor servant-girl; and the author of the moving rhymes betrays her sex, when, after enumerating these extreme calamities, she proclaims with equal pathos, that the Queen was robbed of her diamonds and jewels, and every gown and other article of elegant attire.

This brutality, however, could not bend Adelaide to his purpose; and knowing her popularity, and that with her personal beauty and mental superiority she might contract an alliance with some prince or noble, who with her aid could not fail in wrenching from him the crown he disgraced, Berenger durst not set her at large, but, after a last effort to compel her to obedience, he confined her in the solitary tower (the tower of the rock of Garda) on the Lake of Benacus, where, at the time of the opening of our story, she had passed many months, forgotten by the thoughtless many, but pitied and revered by a faithful few. Of the friends she had left in the world none was so ardent and devoted as Count Azzo, the lord of Canossa, and none in wealth, power, and valour, so well able to benefit the cause he should embrace. From the first days of her imprisonment he had sworn to release her or die in the attempt, and his efforts had only been delayed by necessary caution, and for the completion of a magnificent scheme, whose success

should give her with liberty a royal defender and the throne of Italy. His generous virtues were almost unique in his days, and are rare in our own, for his admiration of Adelaide—we might call it his love—was intense, and few could have blamed him had he contemplated the prize of her hand as her liberator's reward. Indeed, such thoughts would at times and involuntarily flit through his head; but regard for her who could not be safe from the tyranny of Berenger with a protector less powerful than a royal one suppressed the aspirations of his heart, and he nobly persevered in those endeavours which, at the moment he completed them, would give the beautiful Adelaide to the arms of another. When, however, he pictured to himself the Queen at liberty—liberated by him—returning her grateful, enthusiastic thanks, and then departing on her higher destinies, and leaving him for ever, a chill would strike his heart; nor could he always repress such exclamations as he had uttered in the forest, "Yes! I may gain, but most assuredly I shall lose!"

The castle on the road to which we left the Count in a troubled humour was not that of Canossa, but an inferior residence to which he occasionally resorted for the advantages of hunting. When he reached it, he summoned a confidential attendant to his presence. "Guido!" said he, in a tone of irritated impatience, "is neither of my messengers returned; is there no news from Rome—have no strangers reached my gates?" "None, my Lord," was the concise reply. "Then, by the Saints! Guido," continued the Count, in the same tone, "it is time they should; for our secret is abroad, and the fate of Queen Adelaide, without speaking of our own, is at the discretion of one who hath not taken the oath that binds us!" He had scarcely given vent to his feelings when the tramp of horses' feet was heard and the drawbridge horn was blown. "Ha!" cried the Count, and his eyes sparkled, "they are come at last! What is the hour, Guido?" "Even now, the sun-dial pointed noon," replied the servant. "*Evviva!* punctual to the minute; such are his Holiness's emissaries! Away, Guido," continued Azzo, "and see refreshments carried to the chamber in the north tower; and be it your care, while

*they* are with me, to prevent any foot from ascending those stairs !”

The Count received his visitors at the door of the great sala or hall of the castle, where he started at discovering in one of them, who now wore, not a Benedictine's, but a secular priest's dress, the face of the mysterious man who had so troubled him in the forest ; but having welcomed them, and spoken for some time in an undertone of voice with the elder of the party, whose costume and bearing denoted a Roman churchman of high rank, they all retired together to the north tower. It was evening when a courier, a tried and faithful vassal of Count Azzo's, arrived with breathless speed at the castle. Guido, who announced his arrival, found his master still in deep discussion with the strangers, and the courier was sent to him in the tower. A short time after, Guido was summoned thither to receive his lord's commands, which were, that he should watch that night with the warder of the castle and the courier who had just arrived, taking good care that the rest of the household should be kept out of the way. About an hour after sunset, the gallant train of hunters returned from the forest. Those who were guests, or of the household of Count Azzo, entered the castle, and the others, with a gay “Good-night,” repaired to the residence of a neighbouring chieftain. Two of his visitors were admitted by Azzo to the secret congress in the north tower ; and the rest, after expressing their surprise at the extraordinary retreat of the Count from the chase in the morning and his seclusion at night, directed all their attention to a sumptuous supper.

The night wore on, silence reigned within the castle, and huntsmen and servants were sunk in deep sleep, as Guido and his mate kept watch in the outer barbican, occasionally turning their eyes to the north tower of the castle, where light still glimmered through a deep, narrow window.

The broad moon rode triumphantly in a cloudless sky, and the hour of midnight was written on her silvery face, when the keen eye of the courier distinguished afar off the figures of two horsemen. They presently disappeared in a wooded hollow, but anon they were seen again turning their horses' heads towards the broad,



open way that led to the castle ; and soon they were so near that the tramp of their horses' feet was heard on the silence of night. Guido ran to warn his master. The drawbridge was lowered, and the travellers and Count Azzo arrived at the same moment at the edge of the deep moat, whence, after the interchange of such courtesies as were appropriated to personages of the highest rank, they together entered the castle, and repaired to the midnight council sitting in the chamber of the north tower. "The Ultramontanes are come ; I knew them by their blue eyes and fair moustaches," mused the faithful Guido, as he retired to his late bed ; "the plot is complete, and now my noble master must either release the captive Queen and change the destinies of Italy, or lose his life to the tyrant Berenger !"

Whilst long-ripening measures were thus in operation in favour of Adelaide, her sufferings were great ; and whilst the secret arrivals and the councils we have alluded to were passing in the Count's castle, she was pining with utter hopelessness in the Rocca di Garda. That very night, she was walking with rapid steps up and down her gloomy room, trying so to fatigue herself that she might sleep ; but gentle sleep's approaches were repelled by tumultuous thoughts, and even when her delicate, wasted form ached with fatigue and was overcome with lassitude, her mind was as active as ever. She sat down at her iron-grated window ; below her was the placid lake, shining in the clear moonlight, and murmuring against the rocky shore with a stilly sound like the sighs of one in sleep ; and high above the strong fortress rose a steep mountain, whose pines and brushwood, as the subdued night-breeze swept among them, seemed to respond to the voice of the waters. The vault of heaven was purely bright, and, oh ! how fervently did the mourner sigh, as she gazed upon it, to be liberated, not merely from the gloomy dungeon in which her despondency told her she was destined to pass the rest of her days, but from the iron chains of life, that for her had once been all golden. The tranquillity of external objects had at length an effect, and her eyes, suffused with tears, sought the moon and her attendant stars, and she claimed communion with them. These soft and

delightful soothings did not often visit her harassed mind, nor could the inspiration of the present moment continue. The damp, the silence and solitude of the prison, fell with deadly influence upon her. "All is lost!" she sadly exclaimed, as she renewed her hurried walk over the rude stone floor of the cell; "all is lost! The past indeed is left, but the past adds bitterness to the present! And is there indeed not one that is faithful to the widowed Queen of the good and generous Lothaire—not one?"

In a paroxysm of mental agony, she threw herself on her wretched pallet. The long train of courtiers and casqued knights passed before her in review, and she dwelt on the time when her smile beamed happiness—her slightest wish was law. And where were they all now, and the palace of Pavia, and the groves of Monza?—and where the fond husband and the devoted friends? These reflections could not be endured; she clasped her attenuated hands together and screamed aloud, "Are ye traitors, traitors all?"

The captive Queen had passed a night like this, and was sleeping the short, troubled sleep of the unhappy, when, towards the noon of the following day, she was aroused by her maiden, who told her Ruggiero her jailer desired to speak to her. "What wants the man of me—his Queen, though his victim?" said Adelaide quickly. "In truth, I know not, my Lady," said the menial; "but something extraordinary is happening here. Above an hour ago, I saw a troop of horsemen cross the brow of the hill behind the castle; and I think they all came here, for I have heard noise and confusion in this old tower ever since!" "Some new persecution of my implacable enemies," said Adelaide, rising; "but I will meet it like a Queen: admit the man!" The jailer, who, in spite of his calling, had an instinctive feeling for woman, and a certain sentiment of awe and deference for fallen majesty, bowed before the Queen, and informed her a warrior from the court of King Berenger had arrived with a message for her, which he now desired to deliver in person.

"The slave of a tyrant deserves not the warrior's name, and the business that brings him to my prison must be uncourtly; but

since I cannot choose, you may even send him hither," said Adelaide, with a tone of assumed haughtiness.

The man retired, and anon the messenger of Berenger, armed *cap-à-pied*, entered the cell. "Ha!" exclaimed the Queen, "one pang at least is saved me. I never saw this man before; he is no summer friend—no creature of mine or my husband's bounty. But may I know," and she fixed her eyes sternly on him, and spoke in a tone of proud derision, "to what I am indebted for the honour of this visit?" The warrior, who had paid none of those signs of respect due to her rank and her sex, began in a gross manner to impart his business. "Slave—uncourteous slave!" cried Adelaide, and she struck her little foot on the dungeon floor, and made the man in steel start from a helpless woman—"foul-spoken intruder! is it thus you approach and address the daughter of a royal race?" The villain's countenance fell; and though he attempted to be as imperious as before, he felt his spirit was subjected, and his tongue faltered as he said, "I know and care for no royal race save that of my Lord Berenger." "A murderer—an usurper!" exclaimed Adelaide; "but treachery and force destroy not right; and know I am as much a Queen as when I sat on the throne of Italy. But why need I assert my dignity to a wretch like you? Speak! what would my enemies of me?" It was some time, so subdued was he by the majesty of her manner, the deep tones of her voice, and the flashing of her dark eyes, ere the messenger could reply, falteringly, "The King, my master, inquires through me, whether, tired with confinement, you would not change your dungeon for a palace. Prince Adelbert still awaits your decision, and by accepting his hand you may indeed once more be Queen of Italy." "Rather than do the will of Berenger, I will suffer his utmost cruelty; rather than espouse his son, I will give my hand to death! This is your answer. I am firm as ever," and then the heroic Adelaide pointed to the door of her cell. The warrior involuntarily obeyed her motion, and had almost reached the door ere he bethought himself that his commission gave him command over the Queen, and that she, though so regal and unbending, was still a weak, undefended

woman, and wholly in his power. He again approached her, and asked her if such were the answer she gave to King Berenger. "It is—and the only one I will ever deign to give to the author of my husband's death and the usurper of his throne," replied Adelaide. "If so, you may prepare for that worst which you have dared," said the messenger, brutally; "and my orders are to carry you to a spot compared to which this Rocca di Garda is a paradise, where your torments will be unbearable, and where you may find——" "A grave!" cried the Queen; and as she looked on the vile emissary, she thought she saw one fully equal to the commission of the foulest murder. "Ah! and does the prospect of death change your purpose?" inquired he, with an air of triumph. "The grave—the grave may be an object of dread to such as you and your employers," said Adelaide; "to me it is a peaceful bed, a holy asylum, a refuge from crime and grief. I am resolute as ever." "Then prepare for a long journey. As soon as night arrives, and our steeds are sufficiently refreshed to undergo new fatigues, you depart hence with me." With these words, he turned his back on the Queen and left her cell.

Exhausted, benumbed in body and spirit, Adelaide again threw herself on her pallet, by the side of which her utterly stupefied attendant sat and wept. The day passed away in this wretched manner.

The setting sun darted his golden rays through her prison bars. Adelaide then rose and repaired to the window to take a last glance at the lake, and the mountains, and the waving woods—those beautiful objects she had associated with her sorrows. She knelt down, and leaning her aching head against the rusted grating, gazed with a force and intensity of perception she had never before known, on those objects she was never again to see, until dim twilight. This was the hour of prayer. In repeating the "Ave Maria" she gained mental strength, and continued her prayers to Heaven with spiritual fervour. She was aroused from her devotions by the cry of her attendant, who springing towards her, exclaimed, "Merciful saints! what noise is that?" Adelaide listened, and heard distinctly sounds at the farther end of the room, as if

some one were attempting to force an entrance through the wall. She sprang from her knees ; but before she had moved a step, a door of whose existence she had never doubted, so well was it made to resemble the texture of the wall, turned on its hinges, and a dark figure glided into the room. The timid girl, at this apparition, fell senseless at her mistress's feet, and the blood ran cold in Adelaide's veins. The mysterious intruder advanced ; but the obscurity of the cell did not permit the Queen to distinguish until he was near the window, when, falling on his knee, and saluting her by her royal titles, he was revealed by the uncertain twilight, an aged man in the black garb of a priest.

"Has merciful Heaven heard my last fervent prayer?" exclaimed the Queen : "But say, holy father, who art thou, and how camest thou here?" "Men call me the Deacon Martin," replied the priest, kissing her extended hand : "I am a faithful servant of the Church, and a devoted subject of your Majesty. How I came hither, time permits me not to explain : but you may know the wherefore—I come to save you." "Ha!" cried the Queen, clasping her hands, "and is there yet a hope for me?—is there one faithful soul left in a faithless world?" "Not one, but thousands!" replied the priest, rising ; "and here is a noble warrior, a friend of the virtuous Lothaire's, to give you better assurance." He repaired to the secret door by which he had entered, and presently returned with a warrior, who fell at the feet of Adelaide to render homage as to a sovereign. "What! Count Azzo, the bold and the true!" exclaimed the Queen, presenting him her hand. "Ah! whilst you lived I have been unjust to doubt that there was no faith on earth." "My royal mistress," replied the Count, "my life has ever been yours ; and there are other warriors as true and nobler than I. This place is not one for explanation—the moments are of value. Say, Queen Adelaide, you will rely on my honour and my means, and I will carry you at once beyond the reach of danger." "Generous man! I rely implicitly, and will follow you this instant," said the Queen ; "but I cannot abandon this helpless one!" The priest raised the youthful attendant, who was soon made sensible of the present situation. Count Azzo

supported the Queen, and they passed through the unknown door, which the Deacon Martin took care to close after them. Beyond the door was a staircase, so dark, winding, and mysterious, that it seemed to lead into the very bowels of the earth; and so dilapidated was its condition, that it required the utmost care, and at times considerable exertion of strength on the part of the warrior and the priest, to carry the Queen and her attendant over it. At length, however, when in total darkness, the Deacon preceded, and opened a low iron door, through which the party crawled one by one, and emerged in the free open air beyond the fortress walls. Count Azzo cut a way for the Queen with his massy sword through the thick underwood and bushes that grew round the base of the tower, and in a few moments had the inexpressible satisfaction of handing his royal mistress to a little pinnacle that lay concealed under a rock. The Count and the priest seized each an oar, and they rowed vigorously over the calm Lake Benacus.

Adelaide had thanked Heaven and her deliverer that she was now safe, when, on turning her head back towards the fortress, she saw the red light of torches gleaming through the casement of the cell she had fled from. "Powers of mercy!" she exclaimed, trembling, "they have gone to seek me, to remove me, as *he* threatened; they miss me, and will pursue us!" "Fear not, royal lady," said the Count, "they have not a bark near them that will float on the water—my friend Martin has taken care of them." "But they will scour the shores of the lake on horseback, and where shall we land?" said Adelaide. "And is it the first time," said Azzo mildly, "that my arm has triumphed over your enemies?" "But, alas! noble Count, they are many. A troop of horse that arrived this morning, with an insulting traitor for their commander, who was this night to transport me to a prison still more horrid, or to death, are there ready to pursue us." "To Heaven the praise that we arrived so opportunely!" replied the warrior; "but let them come; I have those at hand to meet them." The silence which ensued was soon broken by the noise of horses' hoofs, and in the next minute a number of armed men were seen by the light of the risen moon galloping along the cliffs that overhung the lake. The heart of

Adelaide sunk within her as she heard the shouts of the foremost rider, and recognised the savage emissary of Berenger; but the Count and priest, with apparent indifference, rowed on, and having doubled a jutting rock or cape, made for shore with all their might. What could be their intentions? In a minute her rapid pursuers would be where the prow of the boat pointed. She was about to inquire, when Azzo blew a shrill blast on a horn, and a strong squadron of horse emerged from some screening trees, and galloped down to the beach. A few more strokes of the oar and the pinnacle touched the strand, where the fugitives were landed, in the midst of enthusiastic cries of "Long live Queen Adelaide!"

The headlong pursuers, who had been brought to a halt by this unexpected appearance of force, on reconnoitring it, prepared for as hasty a retreat. "Fifty pieces of gold," shouted Count Azzo, "to him who will bring me the head of the traitor who leads that band!" At the instant a dozen warriors darted after Berenger's captain, who was the last to flee. Their steeds were fresh, and they were gaining on him; but his punishment was not allotted to the hands of man. In one part of the road which lay close to the cliff there was a tall rock, with only a few feet intervening between it and the cliff's rough edge: just at this spot his steed stumbled; and when he madly spurred the animal, it reared, started back, and horseman and horse fell over the rocks into the deep lake below. The Queen heard the shriek of horror and the dread rebound, and saw the flashing waters close over her enemy.

Count Azzo's men returned from their pursuit; and the Queen having been mounted on a gentle palfrey, they continued their journey. The way was long; but Adelaide, and Azzo, who rode by her bridle, had ample subjects of conversation. The latter explained how long and unweariedly he had laboured in her cause, and the means by which the Deacon Martin—a man whose resources he described as almost supernatural—had discovered the access to her prison and person. The Queen, on her part, described her sufferings, and expressed her boundless gratitude. "But now," she said, when time had given her composure, and she

could think of the future, "whither will my deliverer carry me? Berenger is still on a throne—he will employ the power of a kingdom to seize my person. Alas! for me and for you there can be no resting-place in fair Italy!" "Does the Queen forget the castle of Canossa?" said the Count: "no force can prevail against its virgin walls, and not one of my vassals within them is capable of a treacherous deed. In a few short hours we shall be there." "Berenger will besiege you in your stronghold, and time and famine may do what his arms cannot. Alas! alas! that I should bring ruin on my generous deliverer!" and as the Queen spoke, she certainly felt more for Azzo than for herself. "In relying on my honour and fealty," said the Count, "did not the loyal Adelaide say she confided in my means of serving her also? And think not for a moment that those means, the combination and result of many long months' study and labour, are weak or deficient. I have called for aid beyond the Alps; the magazines of Canossa\* are not scantily supplied with provisions for a garrison; we have a few luxuries for our Queen; and before either be exhausted, half Italy will be up in arms against the tyrant of whom she is weary, and a royal army under the towers of Canossa to escort you to the gates of Pavia. Within the walls of my castle you will find the confirmation of my words, and we shall soon be there!" In an enthusiasm of gratitude, the Queen laid her hand on Count Azzo's, and her wan but beautiful face was turned full to his, as she said, "My noble deliverer, I consign my fate wholly to your care. I have no more doubts, and will trouble you with no more questions!" Her own agitation prevented her from observing that of the Count's, great as it was, and well might be, at these passionate demonstrations of gratitude from the being whose image he had so long adored in secret, and who now seemed more touchingly lovely than ever. Meanwhile, the hours of night had revolved; and as they issued from a thick wood, where the grey dawn could scarcely penetrate—

\* "Canossa, ben provveduto di vettovaglia, disposto erasi a lunga difesa."—Bossi, Storia d' Italia.



Temp' era dal principio del mattino,  
E 'l sol montava in sù con quelle stelle  
Ch' eran con lui, quando l'Amor divino  
Mosse da prima quelle cose belle.\*

Nor had they far to prosecute the journey, the fatigues of which, in her weak state, the Queen began to feel most painfully ; for, on ascending a slight eminence beyond the woods, the dark broad mass of the castle of Canossa was seen crowning an almost perpendicular steep. Revived by the light of the risen sun and the morning breeze, and that glorious feeling of liberty to which she had been so long a stranger, Adelaide gave the reins to her spirited palfrey, who, acknowledging the animating approach of home, cantered over the dewy sward. The party soon reached the castle gates ; and as she was received by a band of warriors under arms, and by joyous acclamations, the banner of Queen Adelaide was hoisted on the turrets of Canossa. Within, the Queen found an apartment, furnished with all the elegance and luxury known in those days, ready for her reception. Here the Count, who had conducted her to it, bent his knee, kissed her royal hand, and, retiring, left her to that repose of which she had so much need.

It was late in the afternoon ere Azzo again visited his sovereign. He found her much restored by the happy sleep and congenial refreshment she had enjoyed, and at once asked her with courtly form and etiquette, whether it was her pleasure to receive certain envoys that were in attendance. The Queen, with much animation, expressed her readiness to meet the friends of Azzo and of herself. She rose to go, but the Count said, with some hesitation, "We cannot permit our Queen to appear before strangers in so unworthy a garb !" "Ah ! true, true !" cried the Queen, and she cast an angry glance on the soiled and torn dress she wore. "But my enemies have left me nothing—nothing but this menial's garment !" "And I," said the Count, with a smile, "more accustomed to the choice of coats of mail than of female gear, may apprehend I have but indifferently supplied your toilette ; indeed,

\* Dante, *L'Inferno*, Canto i.

I have procured nothing but a royal mantle ; but a dozen couriers on my swiftest horses shall be despatched for the things that are needful !" "A troop of horse for the wardrobe of a fallen, bankrupt Queen !" said Adelaide, smilingly : "that is too much, generous warrior ! but bring hither the mantle, and I will receive the envoys you speak of in right royal state !" The Count left the room, and presently returned with a mantle of purple studded with golden stars. "May I presume," inquired Azzo, reverentially, "to invest Queen Adelaide with the robe of royalty ?" "And from whom could I accept that service," replied Adelaide, "save from you, Sir Count, to whom I owe everything ?" "Other hands than mine," said Azzo, suppressing a sigh as he threw the mantle over the graceful and majestic figure of his mistress—"other hands must place the crown upon your head !" "But yours is the earlier and better service ; and none, my noble deliverer, will ever merit at my hands what you have merited," replied the Queen ; "and now repair we to our hall of audience. Your arm, Count Azzo !"

Adelaide found arrayed, on her passage, the vassals of Canossa ; and her surprise and satisfaction were increased, on being ushered into an extensive hall, to discover that a sort of throne had been prepared for her, with other appurtenances and insignia of royalty. She was handed to her seat by the Count. In brief time the doors of the hall were thrown open, and three persons, in clerical habits, advanced to the foot of the throne. It was for the Count to introduce them. "The virtuous and pious Cardinal Lamberto, the Nunzio of his Holiness the Pope Agapito to Queen Adelaide !" said Azzo, presenting the first ;—"Adelardo, the just and beneficent Bishop of Reggio, the warmest and most indefatigable of Queen Adelaide's friends !" presenting the second ;—and then turning to the third, who now in his turn knelt before Adelaide, "the Deacon Martino, the discoverer of men's thoughts and of secret passages, whose services are already well known to the Queen !"

After the ceremony of introduction, and the royal courtesies, which Adelaide had not forgotten in the Rocca di Garda, the ecclesiastical mission entered upon business, and the Queen was

informed that the Vatican, which had assisted in her liberation, was ready to employ all the force of its holy arms in her defence and preservation. The Bishop of Reggio, one of the richest and most powerful prelates of Italy, added for his own part, that not only were the riches of his diocese at her command, but that all Lombardy was devoted to her cause. The eyes of the Queen beamed with gratitude and happiness on Azzo, who now presented another and very different envoy. "The Count Rodolph!" said he, as a fair-haired warrior in splendid armour paid his devoirs to majesty: "the chamberlain, the confidant of Otho, the sovereign of Germany, the conqueror of the Pagans, the check to the savage Hungarians,\* and that great King's envoy to Adelaide the Queen, or, it might be, the Empress of Italy!" "Ha!" exclaimed Adelaide, and her face, which had been coloured by joy and excitement, waxed deadly pale: "Was it not the same Otho who assisted and armed this Berenger—this traitor Count of Ivrea, who now possesses their throne against my husband's house?" "Against the tyrannical Hugo," respectfully replied the envoy. "Otho knew not the virtues of his son Lothaire, until it was too late; but *now* he has enregistered vows in Heaven, to redress the wrongs of Lothaire's widow, and the injuries which he himself, though unwittingly, has inflicted on Italy! and already as brave an army as ever descended the Alps is in full march to support Queen Adelaide."

At the termination of the audience, Count Azzo held a long and secret conversation with the German, Rodolph, who already prepared his departure to rejoin his master, Otho. Every measure had been completed, his plans could not fail of success; but the northern envoy could never have guessed the pang, mingled with pleasure and triumph, he inflicted on the susceptible Italian, when he protested he had not seen beauty and grace so perfect before, and that one glance of Adelaide's eyes would make Otho her

\* "Othon le Grand, qui régnoit depuis l'année 937, avoit continué avec succès la guerre contre les Païens, et ses victoires fermoient aux Hongrois l'Occident, qu'ils avoient si long-temps dévasté."—*Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age*, par Sismondi, ch. i.

slave, herself mistress of many other regions than those of Italy. Yet as Count Azzo's heart ached, he could not but feel that towards this consummation all his strenuous endeavours had been directed; and if he sighed with love, he condemned the passion as hopeless and presumptuous, and repelled its insidious influences by reflecting on the splendid destinies of his royal mistress. His situation, however, was one of extreme difficulty and delicacy; for the Queen, who rapidly recovered from the effects of her barbarous imprisonment, and bloomed every day with a fresh beauty, was continually seeking his presence for consultation or familiar converse; and at times the warmth of her gratitude might have been mistaken, by one a little more self-confident than he, for the warmth of incipient love.

Perhaps, however, it was well for both Adelaide and Azzo, and for himself, that Otho's rapid movements did not allow this state of things a long duration. The powerful monarch entered Italy by the pass of Trent, the people joined him, and the troops of Berenger fled before his dreaded arms. As he advanced, even the shadow of an opposition disappeared, and he entered Pavia without bloodshed, or, in the words of the nun Rosvida, the poet of Adelaide, "*clarem referens sine Marte triumphum.*" From this undisputed capital he sent splendid presents to the Queen, and a chosen and noble band of warriors to escort her from the stronghold of Canossa to the Court of Pavia. Great was the impatience of the warrior King for the return of that gallant band. His envoy, Rodolph, had fascinated his imagination with his description of the charms of the royal widow, now his protégée; his heart was disposed to gentler triumphs, of arms and conquests he had already had enough, and he might have exclaimed in the solitariness of his heart, and with greater justice than Agamemnon—

\* \* \* E che mi giova  
La gloria ond' io vo carico? a che gl' allori  
Fra tanti rischj e memorande angosce  
Col sudor compri; s' io per essi ho dato  
Più sonmo bene, del mio cor la pace!

But personal happiness, as well as military glory, was attendant in

the train of Otho the Great:\* the beautiful and the virtuous Adelaide came at last. She was not insensible to a warrior's worth, and the advantages of the union he at once proposed. After as short a time as was necessary for the splendid preparations, that union was celebrated, and other hands than Azzo's—the royal hands of Otho—placed a crown on the head of Adelaide in the cathedral of Pavia.

And what became of the generous deliverer? When he had resigned his charge to the protection of a king, he bade farewell, and returned to his castle, sighing as he went, "Indeed I have won, but have lost!" He did not, however, indolently resign himself to moodiness and disgust, that makes the food it feeds on, but sought and found, as men will do who renounce not the energies of their nature, a cure for his heart's wounds in a stirring life, which to its latest moment was devoted to his Queen. The romantic adventures of Adelaide are finished; her after-life was brilliant beyond compare. She lived to be an Empress; and when she died, the Church of Rome testified its sense of her virtues and piety, by ranking her name among those of the saints.

\* The affix of "The Great" was accorded to Otho the First at a later period, and deservedly. "Othon mérite bien plus que Charlemagne le nom de grand homme, ou du moins son règne eut une influence bien plus salutaire sur le sort des peuples qui lui étoient soumis. Charles eut l'ambition des conquérans, et pour élever son empire, il détruisit, avec l'esprit national, la vigueur des peuples qu'il avait vaincus; Othon ne remporta pas de moindres victoires que lui, mais ce fût sur les ennemis de la civilisation, sur des aggresseurs qui dévastoient l'empire par leurs irruptions."—Sismondi, ch. ii. See also Gibbon, ch. xlix. Hallam's "Middle Ages," ch. iii. part i., and Muratori.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Tenth and Eleventh Centuries.

FROM THE CORONATION OF OTHO THE GREAT AS EMPEROR, TO THE FIRST  
ENTRANCE OF THE NORMANS IN ITALY.

961.—THE condition of Italy, as indeed that of all Europe, was wretched and degraded during the whole of the tenth century. The tranquillity which had been expected from the government of Otho, as one great sovereign, was frequently interrupted; Rome, the residence of the Popes, and which now assumed the character of the Holy City, being most frequent in sedition, conspiracy, and bloodshed. Indeed, the Roman populace are conspicuous during all the darker ages for their turbulence and ferocity: among her nobles there were several characters who might have recalled the ancient glories of the republic, but their courage was dissipated in paltry, internal feuds—their barbarism was excessive. Machiavelli gives this account of the government: “Two consuls of the noble order were created annually, and they governed Rome according to ancient custom; to the consuls was added a prefect, who accounted for their acts to the Roman people; there was, besides, a council of twelve men, who every year nominated rectors to all the lands or districts subject to Rome. The Pope enjoyed in Rome, as in all the rest of Italy, more or less authority, according to the favour of the Emperors or of the other princes who happened to be most powerful in that country.”\* But the Roman people were long intractable, and the Popes, living among them, as heads of the Christian world, received worse treatment from them than from the foreign princes, or the barbarians from beyond the Alps or the seas. And at the very moment that the whole of the Western Empire, save the disobedient city of the Church, trembled, as at the voice of angered Divinity, at the censures and bulls of the Roman pontiffs, the Roman people would rebel against them, and even raise their hands against their lives.

963.—Pope John XII., one of the worst characters that have disgraced the tiara, conspired against the Emperor Otho the Great. The Emperor went to Rome, where the people inclined to him rather than to their Pontiff,

\* *Delle Istorie Fiorentine*, lib. I.

who had appeared, at the first approach of the Emperor, armed like a Saint George, but had fled, and was summoned to appear to answer for his crimes. On his non-appearance, a new Pope, Leo VIII., was elected under the auspices of the Emperor, who obtained from all the orders of the Romans a solemn oath not to choose from that time forward any pope without the consent of the Imperial Court. This assertion of temporal authority over the spiritual was however to be forgotten in after-years, when the popes pretended that the election of no Emperor could be valid without their confirmation of it. When the elevation of Leo was made known, the fugitive Pope John fulminated an excommunication against him, the Emperor, and all who had taken part in it. Pope Leo returned his spiritual fire; and this is one of the many disgraceful instances in which we see two popes (sometimes there were three) pitted against each other, and each asserting that he acts under the immediate and infallible inspiration of the Blessed Spirit!

Scarcely had the Emperor turned his back on Rome, when that troublous city was occupied by the faction of Pope John, which obliged Leo (the Emperor's Pope) to flee for his life. Otho's vengeance this time was tremendous: he collected his forces instantly, and retracing his steps laid siege to Rome, where John XII. was avenging himself on his enemies by cutting off their fingers, hands, tongues, or noses. Famine obliged the Romans to surrender. Otho exiled the consuls, hanged the tribunes, and scourged the prefect through the city, but death had rescued Pope John from his fury.

973.—The Emperor Otho the Great died at an advanced age, and after a long reign. His son, nicknamed "The Red," who had already for several years been crowned and associated in the government of his extensive states, succeeded as Otho II.

983.—While Otho II. was preparing a formidable army to march against the Saracens in Italy, and even to dislodge them from Sicily, crossing, like a second Xerxes, the Faro of Messina by a bridge of boats, he died at Rome, some say of grief, others of a badly-dressed wound. He was succeeded by his infant son Otho III. A civil war broke out that ravaged the German states of the empire.

984.—During the long minority of Otho III. the vices of the Papal government continued on the increase. In contempt and hatred of the authority of the Popes, the Romans established something like a republic under the Consul Crescentius, whose character is differently drawn as a factious demagogue and a patriot hero, but who certainly governed Rome for several years with more propriety than the pontiffs.

997.—Otho III. being at Ravenna, was seized with an uncontrollable desire to see the marvellous city of Venice, and went thither secretly, with only a few companions. This was the last year of the power and life of the Roman Consul Crescentius, who, on the approach of Otho, shut himself up in the Castle of St. Angelo, an ancient tomb become a fortress, and believed inexpugnable.

It is not correctly known, what is, however, asserted by Italian historians, that Otho III. did not gain possession of Crescentius' person until he had guaranteed his safety by his imperial word and oath ; but it is well ascertained that the consul's head was cut off by the Emperor's orders. Otho did not long survive him ; he died in the flower of his age, a victim it is supposed to poison administered by the avenging widow of Crescentius.

1002.—Henry Duke of Bavaria, surnamed the Saint, was elected emperor by the German princes in the place of Otho III., who, dying without children, the imperial line of Saxony had terminated in his person. Ardoin, the Marquis of Ivrea, assumed the title of King of Italy ; but, two years after, the Emperor Henry the Saint, proceeded to Italy at the head of a powerful army, and subdued him.

1004.—Pavia, the comparatively superb capital of Lombardy, was reduced to ashes, in consequence of a quarrel between the Italian subjects and the German soldiery of the Emperor Henry, and that too on the very day of his Italian coronation. A fresh motive was thus added to that hatred of the Germans which was already very common among the Italians.

1016.—The Normans first were observed in Italy, where they began to form establishments which ultimately gave rise to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.





## The Norman Pilgrims ;

OR,

### THE SANCTUARY OF MOUNT GARGANUS.

Nè 'l dir l' andar, nè l' andar lui più lento  
Facea ; ma ragionando andavam forte,  
Sì come nave pinta da buon vento.

DANTE, *Il Purgatorio*.

IN good truth," said an aged man in the curiously mixed garb of a warrior and pilgrim, who was toiling up the sides of the rugged Mount Garganus, in the province of Capitanata—"in good truth, the approach to the shrine of the Archangel Michael is more difficult than any mountain-path I have trodden in Syria or the Holy Land !"

"I know not what sort of mountains the Holy Land may contain," said a younger pilgrim, whose manly beauty and herculean proportions were not all concealed by a loose pilgrim's frock, and flapping hat and scallop, and a rough matted beard and long shocky hair, which betrayed that his journeys had been long and his toilettes short—"I know not the roads of Palestine ; but by Saint Michael ! since I left Normandy I have seen none so rough and breathing as this, though I have crossed both Alp and Appennine, and planted my pilgrim's staff in the clouds !"

"If ruder of ascent, it is not so lofty as the mountains which divide and enclose Italy,"\* said a grey-bearded peasant, who

\* E 'l monte che divide e quel che serra  
L' Italia.—ARIOSTO.

seemed acting as guide to the party. "We shall soon reach its summit; and see! there—beyond that dark grey rock which projects over the chasm, as if it were about to plunge into it, rises the gilded cross that crowns the dome of the Archangel's sanctuary."

"The cross! I see it not!" cried the elder of the two pilgrims who had already spoken, and who now sank his bushy eyebrows and bent his somewhat weakened eyes towards the rock pointed out with that earnestness and impatience with which the home-returning mariner gazes across the waves at the first low line of his long-abandoned native shore as it rises on the horizon.

The eyes of the young man served him better. "I see the blessed mark!" exclaimed he to his companion, and he crossed himself as he spoke; "'tis there, above the cliff!"

"Still I see it not," said the veteran, drawing his hard sinewy hand across his eyes.

"Follow the direction of my finger, thus," replied his comrade. "See! the edge of the rock is fringed with dark-green myrtle bushes, and peeping among them, like a gay floweret, or a bird of rich plumage—and it shows not larger than the bud or the bird—is a bright yellow spot."

"Yes! I have it now," said the old man; and devoutly making the sign of the cross, he turned to a train of pilgrims who were toiling after him with exhausted steps, and in triumphant accents pointed out to their longing eyes the holy spot for which they had travelled so many miles and braved so many dangers. As the devout band caught the glimpse of the gilded cross, they gave vent to their feelings in enthusiastic ejaculations; and then continued their way singing a Latin hymn, of which they understood naught, save that it was in honour of the Archangel Saint Michael. Still, however, they had far to climb. As they ascended, the sides of the mountains became more precipitous—the path narrower and more perilous: it was cut along the hard bare rock in many places into steps, the height of which was proportioned rather to the stride of Titans than that of common men; and this path was edged by a yawning chasm—an abyss whose

intensity of gloom not even a noon-day and an Italian sun could dissipate. Over this rugged way the hardy pilgrims advanced with naked feet, which in many instances being wounded by the flinty nature of the rock and the loose stones, their wake was marked with blood. Yet, in spite of pain and the winding toil of such a climb, which would occasionally cause a tremulousness in their singing, they persevered in their triumphant hymn, whose notes were echoed by rock and mountain-cave with striking effect. A little in the rear of the pilgrims was a sumpter mule, under the guidance of a young Italian peasant ; and it was admirable to see with what precaution and steadiness the poor loaded animal toiled up those mountain steps, seeking with his hoof every little inequality or roughness in the surface of the bare rock that might prevent his sliding, and gathering his limbs under him in a narrowness of space that seemed almost impossible ; while his driver, who joined in the vocal devotions of the strangers, would only now and then cheer him with his voice, or remove a loose rolling stone from his path.\*

The gilded cross had grown to the eye, and now the northern wanderers could see the dome of the church of Saint Michael's. In brief time they might hope to kneel in the far-famed cavern of Mount Garganus, which had been sanctified by the apparition of the Archangel himself. Their feelings were tranquillized by their devotion ; but the troubled elements did not correspond with the serenity of their hearts. Of a sudden, as is not unfrequently seen in these southern regions, dense clouds were blown across the Adriatic Sea—the peaks of the mountains retained them—they gathered in mass and might, and hung with all their terrors over the pilgrims' way and the yawning gulf by their side. The change was overpoweringly rapid, and the gloom of the atmosphere showed the denser from the garish brilliancy and transparency

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\* This description of the dreadful road up Mount Garganus, coming from

English blood mare—achievements of which I was very proud the time. The storm I have attempted to describe I rode through on one of these journeys.

that had so immediately preceded it. At first, only a few very large drops of rain, as if discharged one by one, dropped from the stormy heavens ; but anon those clouds opened, broad sheets of lightning severed them, and a roar of thunder issued thence that seemed to shake the mountain to its very foundations. The pilgrims' chant, their strong, deep voices, died away like an infant's wail : an angered divinity seemed to speak from those black clouds, and an inferior and grosser spirit to respond from the rocky depths of the equally dark chasm where the echoes of the thunder roared long and hoarsely. It was not deep calling upon deep, but the heights of heavens uttering some tremendous message to the depths of the earth. The hearts of the wayfarers quailed for a moment, but their faith was firm : they did not stop on their dangerous road, nor did they cease their singing ; for, as the last reverberation of the thunder rolled in the abyss at their feet, the choral hymn rose to heaven, and might be heard far along the mountain's side. But again the broad lightning flashed, and a peal still more astounding than the first swallowed up their voices. The affrighted mule, that at the first thunder-clap had drawn himself up and stood stock-still with his iron defended hoofs stuck into holes in the rock, started wildly back at the second shock. His driver, seeing his danger, rushed to seize the rope at his neck ; the movement terrified the animal still more, and he again started. He was now within a footstep of the precipice, and trembling in such a degree as almost to shake off his well-lashed burden. The youth screamed for help, and his cry was heard on the dying echoes of the thunder : the pilgrims turned their heads, and in the next instant saw the mule recede that fatal step, and fall backward into the chasm. A horrid snort, not unlike a human shriek of despair, and almost as harrowing, was heard from the poor creature ; and then a tremendous crash at intervals, as he fell and rolled from rock to rock, until a distant and hollow echo told he had reached the bottom of the ravine.

"Santa Maria !" cried one of the devotees, "there go all my treasures!—the relics I bought at Rome, and the rosaries at

Loreto ; my crucifix blessed in the holy porringer, and my tooth of St. Dentato !”

“And there goes what we were to whet our teeth upon !” cried another ;—“our dinner is gone to the wolves, and God knows whether Saint Michael will furnish a repast for so many hungry pilgrims !”

“It is sinful to talk of such trifles as food for the body,” said an old man, who evidently was of authority among the devout band ; “but the mule was a good mule—I *stole* it myself from among a dozen in Piedmont,\* and I have lost a silver effigy of the Madonna, and three skins of Canusium wine which was really reviving to the spirit.”

“Alas ! my three hairs of the beard of Saint Peter, and the nail-parings of Saint Mark, and——” The rest of the loser’s inventory was silenced by another terrific peal of thunder, which made the stoutest heart among them tremble, and interrupted a humane project which some of the band, in the first impulse of their anger, had formed, to throw the poor hired driver over the precipice after the mule for his negligence.

The rain, which had begun in single drops, now descended in a continuous torrent, and by rendering the bare rocks slippery, increased the danger of their way. At last, but not before every pilgrim was drenched to the skin, they reached a natural esplanade of some width, and most opportunely found a cavern which penetrated into the mountain’s side.

Here they determined to remain until the storm should pass. It did pass, and soon, and almost as suddenly as it had commenced. The joyous summer sun again came forth ; the clouds rolled away from mountain and plain, sea and coast ; and, though rude men, the pilgrims ought to have enjoyed the glorious spectacle

\* This theft is quite in character with the men and the times. Even many years after, when the Normans were somewhat civilized by a residence in Italy, and a less precarious mode of life, Gibbon says of them : “Every object of desire—a horse, a woman, a garden—tempted and gratified their rapaciousness.” But the most severe portrait of the Normans is drawn by the biographer of St. Leo IX

spread before them, of the vast Apulian plain—of the ancient city of Sipontium—of the dark blue Adriatic, whose waves, still agitated and freshened by a breeze, fell with a gentle line of white foam on the beach, whose margin was here and there dotted by a fisherman's cabin, and far away by the walls of the town of Barletta.

But the wayfarers were rather inclined to look forward ; and to their great satisfaction, as they emerged from their place of shelter, and the black clouds withdrew almost as rapidly as a scenic decoration, they saw the sanctuary of St. Michael and the Castle of St. Angelo at a very little distance above them. They set up a shout of joy, and, forming into something like processional order, marched with increased speed. As the path, which still wound round the precipitous sides of the mountain, took a sharp and sudden turn, they saw before them a troop of armed men occupying the way. It was one of those positions which abound in Italy (when will a patriot race rise to defend them against the foreign foe?), where a handful of men might keep an army at bay. Our pilgrims, used to war, felt this ; but so daring was their spirit that they would have gone on to the attack at once, had not their guide stepped forward to parley with the occupiers of the narrow pass.

"Save ye, gentle Signiors!" cried the old Italian ; "these are a band of friends, of devout Normans, who have come from the ends of the world to say an 'Ave' in the sanctuary of your glorious and protecting Saint and Archangel."

"If so, it is well, and may St. Michael repay them for their journey!" said the captain of the guard ; "but this blessed sanctuary has been pillaged too often by Saracens and other marauders, to permit us to act otherwise than with vigilance and caution. What are your numbers?"

"Twenty-four, as you may easily see," said the handsome young pilgrim who has been already introduced ; "and each of us want to go straight on to his object, and not to be stopped on his road thus."

"Ye shall even come on here," resumed the guard ; "but first ye must give up your swords and those lances you carry with your pilgrims' staves."

"Resign our arms!" cried the young man indignantly.

"They will be given to you on your departure hence. It is but to secure ourselves, and to preserve peace: where men of many lands meet it is fitting it should be so. Our shrines have been too often defaced, our sanctuary defiled with blood and brawls. Your weapons will be restored to you as you give them."

The guard spoke in a courteous tone; but the pilgrims, besides being desperate fellows habitually, were just now in a special bad humour. They had lost their mule, they were wet to the skin, tired, and hungry.

"Hark ye!" cried several voices together. "We Normans never give up sword or lance but in death! Let us pass in peace, or we will force our way!"

"That is not easy to do," replied the guard; "were ye twenty—a hundred times as strong, we could hurl you from your narrow path into the chasm!"

"We will try our chance rather than return," cried the gallant Normans; and, throwing off their pilgrim's cloaks and grasping their arms, they advanced with a shout along the giddy path.

Before they came in contact with their adversaries, a man splendidly attired in the Greek costume, who from behind the guards had been observing the bold, dauntless bearing of the strangers with admiration, though he seemed to be there but as a spectator, stepped forward and spoke a few words in the ear of the captain. Whatever these words were, their effect was immediate and favourable to the Normans; for the guard withdrew from the narrow defile which they immediately occupied, and whence, from the evidence of numerous large stones gathered there to repel intruders, and from other features in the pass, they saw how certainly their pilgrimage must have ended at the bottom of the ravine had they proceeded to hostilities. When through the defile they looked round to thank the amiable diplomatist, but he was gone. Without, perhaps, being overpowered with the weight of their gratitude to him, they followed a portion of the guard that retired before them to the little town of St. Angelo, which was surrounded by rude walls, and perched on the confined, steep apex of the mountain like an eyrie. At the town gate they were required to pledge

their words that they would comport themselves soberly and tranquilly as long as they should remain in the vicinity of the blessed sanctuary, and without any other difficulty were allowed to enter and go whither they chose. Some of the more fervent of the pilgrims would have proceeded at once to the shrine, but the majority wisely deciding that they should enjoy the scene and their devotions much better when they had satisfied their craving stomachs and dried their garments, they repaired to a sort of hostelry which had been erected for the accommodation of the numerous devotees that flocked at all seasons to Mount Saint Angelo. They could not expect to find the tooth of Saint Dentato, nor the hair of Saint Peter's beard; but as to the creature-comforts lost with the sumpter mule, the hostelry more than supplied them, and the Normans were soon restored to perfect good-humour by copious draughts of a bright vermilion-coloured wine, the produce of the mountain, which, if not so strong as that grown at Canusium, was generous and enlivening.

In the afternoon the refreshed pilgrims repaired with devout feelings to the cave of St. Michael—a place so singular, so romantic, and so sacred, as to merit a brief description. A thick and verdant wood stood above the grotto—it had been planted by the devotees, and produced the more effect, as this part of the mountain, which is so rich in its inner regions in forests of stately oak,\* is entirely destitute of trees. From the branches of these artificially planted trees depended—not fruit, but—stones innumerable; it being one of the practices of the pilgrims of those days to carry each a large stone tied round his neck up the steep mountain, as an additional penance, and to hang it up in the little wood over the Archangel's grotto, with vows and prayers. The entrance into the cave, which had not been excavated by human hands, but formed in the solid rock at the volition of St. Michael, was by a marble gate of vast dimensions, that faced the sunny south. Beyond the gate a flight of fifty-five steps, cut in the rock,

\* *Aquilonibus*

*Querceta Gargani laborant.*

*Horace, lib. ii. Od. 9.*



but covered with milk-white marble, conducted to a spacious chamber whose sides were excavated into numerous little cappelle, each with a shrine and a silver lamp, and into numerous tombs of distinguished Christians, who had been happy to secure so sacred a resting-place for their mortal remains. At the western side of this chamber was another door, not of marble, but of bronze most elaborately worked ; and when this turned on its hinges, which it never did until the sun had risen from the Adriatic and invested with his rays the shoulder of the Mount, the devotee was admitted into the Sanctum Sanctorum, or a small inner cave in which the saint is said to have resided. Cut out of one huge solid block of the almost marble mountain—low, obscure, damp, cold, and horrid, with drops of icy water continually dropping from the rock—a place less adapted for human habitation could scarcely be imagined ; but for this very reason it was the more conducive to the health of the soul.\* Among other shrines that consecrated the gloomy cell was a small, rude altar cut in the rock where the Archangel himself had celebrated diurnally the mysterious mass ; and a few paces from this altar there flowed a gentle fountain, insignificant from the volume of its waters, but most important from the miraculous qualities they contained ; for the sick and afflicted who drank of them with faith were healed and comforted, and the crystal liquid was used all over the country as the most efficacious of medicines for every disease. Around this *spelunca* were niches—not made artificially, but by the hand of nature, in the rock—to invite mortals to holy contemplation and to penitence. In fine, the spot was in all its details, and in its obscurity and mysteriousness, admirably adapted to work on the susceptible superstition of the times ; and our gallant but rude Norman pilgrims, as they knelt at altar after altar, as they prostrated themselves before the shrine of the Archangel, or in the opaque gloom of the caverns—listened to the legends of the place, as told by the priests of Saint Michael, their guides, and received the impressions

\* “Credo,” says the credulous Leandro Alberti, “non ad altro fine ed ornamento fatta che per la salute dell’ anime nostre.”

with a depth and intensity proportioned to their simplicity, and to the original strength of their devotional excitement, which had sufficed to carry them so many hundred miles from their homes, to kneel where the saint had kneeled, and to pray where he had prayed.\* They tarried long, luxuriating in their feelings and imaginings. Compared with this low, gloomy cave, what were the glories of the lofty baronial hall, lighted with a thousand torches, and hung with arms and banners? These coarse, hard rocks, and this darkness that might almost be felt, had been irradiated by the immortal presence of one of the highest of the heavenly host—here, in the bowels of the mountain, the Archangel had held frequent communion with the mother of God; and a breath—an afflatus of the saintly and of the Divine Spirit might still linger in that chilling air. There was the high satisfaction, too, resulting from difficulties overcome—and overcome, in their estimation at least, for the most virtuous and holy of purposes; and as the hardy adventurers pictured on the cave's darkness the long and sultry plains of Apulia, Campania, and Lombardy, and the Alps, the Apennines, and the Jura, and their far-off homes at the extremity of Europe, where France looks across a narrow sea on the white cliffs of England, they might well be disposed to linger at the bourne for which they had suffered so much, and which they had at last attained. They did not turn to depart without a sigh that they could claim no propriety in objects so invaluablely sacred, nor without the contemplation of one of those deeds common in the ages of barbarism, when relics were often purloined, and the possession of a lifeless body, a limb, or a bone, would be a sufficient cause for a bloody war between cities

\* Though I have passed this mountain and the town of Saint Angelo three times, and have been many more times in its neighbourhood, I never stopped to visit the sanctuary. I was then tired of miracles and miraculous and holy spots, but I have since regretted the circumstance. The description of the cave is taken from "Descrizione di tutta Italia," by Leandro Alberti, a great authority in these matters. Gibbon and others, indifferent to the spot as the abode of a saint, would identify it with the residence of the soothsayer Calchas, the son of Thestor, who accompanied the Greeks to Troy; for, according to Strabo (Lib. vi.), Calchas had a temple, an oracle, and a *cavern*, on Mount Garganus.

and states. They could hardly hope at any time to carry away the cave ; but they gazed with cupidity on a crystal crucifix which they were assured had been used by Saint Michael in his devotions. Such a treasure would repay a journey to the ends of the world, yet they felt it was impossible to seize it and escape.

As the Normans wended back towards the regions of day, and had gained the marble-covered steps that led to the mouth of the cave, they saw before them, standing by one of several fissures in the rock, which had been cut through to admit light, the same commanding figure, attired in the Greek costume, who had parleyed with the guards and procured them admission to the sanctuary.

"The benediction of Saint Michael be upon you !" cried the foremost of the Normans, as he caught the eye of the stranger, who seemed to be examining their band with intense interest. "We thank you for the pleasure of having knelt at his altar without the trouble of fighting !"

"Ye should not seem men to think fighting *always* a trouble," said the stranger in an under-tone of voice, as they drew near to him.

"It is never so to a Norman with a clear, fair field !" proudly replied the young pilgrim, whose distinguishing manly beauty has already been alluded to, and whom we may henceforth call by his name—Drogo.

"And in a holy cause !" added his aged companion, who had acknowledged to the merits of the lost mule, and to his theft of the same.

"And can none but a holy cause—nothing less than a pilgrimage to a saint, and a dark hole, direct those swords and lances, which appeared to me a few hours ago, at the mountain pass, to be so familiar to your hands?" inquired the stranger, drawing close to Drogo as he spoke.

"Hem ! hem !—gentle Sir, if you will take a walk with us to the lands whence we come, we will show you, in broad and fertile provinces, objects which have unsheathed the swords and couched the lances of the Normans—and which deserved to be won, as they have been, by us !"

"Something of this hath reached me even in this remote eagle's nest," said the stranger, drawing still closer to Drogo, and speaking almost in a whisper; "moreover, I have seen and respected your determined valour;—and, hark ye!—had I but a thousand men like you, I would put an empire at their disposal!"

"Ay! an empire! and you a Greek—a subject of that empire!" said Drogo, inquiringly.

"I am not what I seem," said the stranger; "but this is not the fitting place for disclosure:—follow me when I emerge from this cavern."

"I will follow you," replied the youth confidently; and turning to his aged and more experienced companion, he imparted the startling hints of the stranger, and requested his attendance at the important congress.

On reaching the door of the cave, the stranger turned and ascended, and his bright-coloured and flowing robes were seen gliding through the dark grove that grew over those sainted vaults. The two Normans followed him, and presently all three disappeared behind the ridge of a hill. When they reached an appropriate place, the stranger paused and addressed the Normans.

"You are of a noble stock," said he, in a flattering tone,—*"I see it in your manly forms and proud bearing (the pilgrims bowed).—You are nobles among your race. Now tell me! could not your invitation and example bring an armament of men, such as are now with you, to sustain a cause where success is certain—the reward incalculably great?"*

"By sea or by land, the companions of Rollo," cried the young Norman, whose enthusiasm was inflamed by the thoughts of his ancestors and their ever victorious leader,—*"by sea or by land, they carried arms that were never seen to retreat before a foe; and, even now, the Normans' enterprise is the same, and they regard not distances. Perhaps you are right—perhaps I, my friend, might head a band of warriors instead of a troop of pilgrims;—but, gentle Sir, how would you employ our Norman blood?"*

"Should you be disinclined to embrace my projects," said the stranger, cautiously, *"may I rely on your preserving my secret?"*

"Implicitly you may !" cried both of the Normans.

"My life, and more than life, depends upon your silence—will you swear it ?" said the stranger.

"Ay, willingly," was the reply ; and the martial pilgrims, who were impatient to gain possession of the secret, raised their swords, kissed the cross on their hilts, and hurriedly swore as much as their inviter required.

"This loose, flowing garb, which the Greeks imitated from the effeminate slaves of the East, covers no Greek, but a mortal foe of the Greek empire—the sworn enemy of all Greeks. My name is Melo—I am an Italian, a noble of the city of Bari, and one who lately would have rescued his country from the oppression, the degradation, of a vile and heretical race !"

"Heretical !" exclaimed Drogo.

"Yes, in good sooth !" said his more learned and travelled companion, "the Greeks are all heretics !"

"Contemners of the *filiogue* !" added the wary Melo.

"Horrible ! Why, a war with such would be a holy war !" cried the young man, whose mind was filled with an indefinite horror of what he understood absolutely nothing.

"As such I deemed it," said the noble citizen of Bari, "when I raised the standard of independence—but, alas ! I had not hearts so bold as yours to enrol under my banners. I was defeated, and became a fugitive. The Greeks thirsted after my blood—I was hunted like a beast of the forest ; and you have no means of conceiving by what execrable, horrid tortures I should have been put to death, had they then succeeded in taking me. But at last I gained this inaccessible retreat ; and from the happy moment in which I saw you this morning, I have again begun to hope—to aspire, as a certainty, at revenging mine and my country's wrongs on the Greeks, and at securing for my coadjutors a most splendid establishment on the rich plains of Apulia !"

"They are fertile plains," said both the Normans.

"Still rich, though so often devastated, so long oppressed by the effeminate Greeks !—Look there !" and Melo, as he spoke, stretched his hand towards the vast Apulian flat, fairly illuminated

by the slanting rays of the setting sun. "There, in that angle, between the river Ofanto and the sea, where *now* but one ruinous town meets the eye, in former days, ere the degradation of Italy began, a dozen prosperous cities rose ;—that solitary sheep-walk—that neglected and unhealthy marsh, where the buffalo wallows, once supported a dense and happy population ; and far away, to the foot of the lofty Mount Vultur, are fertile lands, to reward those who shall wrench them from the Greeks. You may bring a nation with you, bold Normans, and find a prosperous settlement for them all !"

The dark blue eyes of the pilgrims glistened at the moral and physical prospect laid before them ; and Drogo replied, with the energy and hopefulness of youth, "It is enough ! we have heard enough ! we will presently return with troops of Norman lances at our backs. Apulia shall be ours !"

"And Mount Saint Angelo, and the Sanctuary, and the blessed cave of Saint Michael !" added the old man.

"Such prizes are worth contending for," replied Melo, who, resolved that no allurements he could command should be wanting, added to the ardent Drogo, "And perhaps we have other things to tempt the brave and young. The maids of Italy are fair and well-proportioned, fitting wives for the valorous, with whom they might become again what the Roman matrons once were, the mothers of earth's conquerors ! But I have said enough. You are pledged to my cause."

The Normans again raised their heavy, cross-hilted swords to their lips, and vowed to return to Apulia with such retainers and friends as they could influence in Normandy. The bold conspirator then withdrew, inviting them to repair in the evening to his residence, where they, and as many of their companions as they chose to conduct with them, should be hospitably entertained. In the hostelry, where Drogo and his friend asked a few simple questions as to the character and quality of the fugitive noble of Bari, they received a surprising account of his wealth and munificence, and they might judge for themselves, when, shortly after, they were received by Melo in a banquetting-hall that seemed to

have been prepared by a prince for the entertainment of princes. They were pledged in wine-cups of solid gold and exquisite workmanship, and the table presented to their astonished eyes such a treasure of gold, of silver, and of crystal, as they had never before seen. The repast and the wines were worthy of the vessels they were served in ; nor did the busy dreams of ambition deaden the appetites of the sturdy Normans. Melo presided, with no other friend with him than his brother-in-law—the associate in his revolt, exile, and recently formed views. When the elated pilgrims, who were dazzled with the superior refinement which Melo had imitated from the nobles of the Greek empire, rose to depart, their generous host informed them that they would find, on their return to the hostelry, that he had thought of the losses they had sustained with the mule. Drogo, he insisted, should sleep where he had supped : an apartment had been prepared for him. It had not been deemed expedient to admit as yet the companions of Drogo and the old man into the important secret, and the festivity of the evening had not been interrupted by discussion and business ; but on finding themselves alone with the gallant young Norman, Melo and his relative turned to the subject that was to make them or to mar them, and drew such a picture of the natural wealth of the country, the cowardice and unpopularity of the Greeks, the weakness of their fortified towns—adding whatever besides might operate upon the susceptible warrior and devout Catholic—that he wished the distances of time and place were annihilated, and that he at once could march to victory and glory. He retired to rest with a mind excited to its utmost pitch ; and the scenes and novel suggestions of the day floated through his brain with overpowering vividness and confusion. The wine he had drunk had brightened, instead of dulling, his imaginative faculties : he lay on his couch like one affected by a magic spell, when, to complete that enchantment, the tones of a musical instrument and of a gentle voice—a female voice, silvery and thrilling—broke upon the hushed stillness of night. His whole soul was transported to his ears, and floated on the cadence of the invisible minstrel ; and when the voice was hushed, and the last vibration of the instru-

ment had ceased to undulate, he fancied—he felt—that he had listened to one of the celestial choir. At last sleep fell upon his tired senses ; but sleep was scarcely less ecstatic ; for his dreams renewed in fantastic assemblage the mountain path, and the consecrated grot—the splendid stranger, and the Apulian plain—the sumptuous banquet—the flying Greeks—a palace, himself its master—a fair bride, and a wide estate, with horses, hawks and hounds, and a minstrel that discoursed heavenly music.

It was much later than a soldier's and a pilgrim's hour when Drogo awoke the following morning. Tasso had not yet lived his life of poetry and woe, and created the garden of Armida, or the young Norman might have fancied himself there. On approaching a window that looked over a small enclosed garden, he saw a youthful female figure busied in gathering flowers, so exquisitely beautiful, that he rubbed his eyes, and thought he still must dream. Her face, which was upturned as her small taper fingers reached to some flaunting roses high above her head, was exquisite in formation and complexion, still more exquisite in expression. Her form was as faultless as her face, and displayed with all its advantages by a costume of peculiar elegance, such as is still found among some of the islands of the *Ægean*, and which the fair wearer had copied from that of the Greek ladies of Bari. A loose robe of azure silk, which concealed none of the proportions and graces of a lithe swan-like neck and perfectly turned shoulders, was confined at the waist by an Oriental shawl ; thence it descended in broad free folds, but not lower than the knee. Beneath this robe were flowing trousers of linen whiter than *sw* *ow*, and these were contracted above the ankle, leaving exposed the high instepped feet, which were secured in beautiful small slippers, but otherwise naked. Her coiffure should have appeared studied from some ancient Greek statue, so elegant was it, and so classical. A gauze handkerchief, silvery and airy, such as might have been woven by the ancient looms of Ceos, bound her head, and was enwreathed with broad plaits of her glossy black hair ; but the principal treasure of her "*nerissime chiome*" was unconfined, and floated down her shoulders. As the young Norman gazed in ecstasy and



entrancement, by design or chance the lovely maiden turned and looked up to the casement where he was standing : their eyes met ; she remained a few moments as if fascinated by the stranger's ardent looks, then blushed, and retired within the house.

But the charms of those liquid eyes glancing through their long, black, silken lashes, had done their work on Drogo, who was now bound to the cause he had embraced by ties stronger than those of ambition, or any other employed by the artful Melo. For such an Italian bride as that, how much would he dare in the battle ! how willingly would he renounce his country and his kindred ! But who was she ? Could she be his ? Had Melo such a prize to offer ? and would he offer it to him ?

A lover of more modern and more refined times might have been less direct ; but our impetuous Norman at once sought his host, and asked, in very plain terms, whether the angel he had just seen in the garden was his daughter—whether, when he spoke of the maids of Italy who were to reward the brave, he alluded to her—in short, whether he might aspire to such a bride.

"Zoe is my sister's child," replied the wily revolutionist : "her father supped with us last night, and he will confirm what I now assure you, that the hand of his daughter, with a dower that might befit a princess, will in the hour of victory be awarded to the hero who shall have enabled us to throw off our odious chains ! Yes, gallant youth ! Zoe was present to my mind when I spoke of our Italian maids. You have seen her ; and you may tell your comrades there are others within the walls of Bari, and the cities on the Adriatic held by the unwarlike Greeks, as fair as she."

The delighted Drogo might have thought the equality of charms impossible, but he said, "To us Normans you can offer no rewards so tempting. The maidens may prepare for manly bridegrooms. O that I were beyond the Alps !"

"You may soon be there," added Melo ; "your pilgrimage is performed ; you may return with the speed of a courier. Horses I have, and money too ; you shall make your choice, and name your sum."

"It is well considered," replied Drogo ; "I will return with my

aged companion, who has influence among our Normans; the rest of our band may follow, or——”

“Why not remain where they are?” asked Melo.

“Assure them but of good quarters, an ample supply of provisions, fighting, and a proper reward for fighting, and not a man among them will hesitate to stay.”

“All those assurances shall they have, and more,” said Melo; “but my niece salutes you, brave Drogo.”

The Norman turned and beheld with renewed and increased rapture the blushing maiden meekly bowing before him, with her delicate hands crossed on her innocent breast.

At this period the inhabitants of Italy were remote from the simplicity of manners that had distinguished the ancient Romans, from the freedom of social intercourse between the two sexes that existed under the empire, as well as under the republic, and which, extended and cultivated in modern times, has produced half the civilization and all the amenities of European society. They had been infected by the example of the domestic habits of the Greeks, and their women were condemned to a jealous seclusion, rarely appearing in the company of men, except those men stood in a close degree of relationship. But Melo and his brother-in-law could despise a prejudice. Zoe was introduced to strengthen that bond on which their hopes depended; and they did not miscalculate the effects of her charms, and the character of the susceptible Norman. A few brief, timid words—another and another meeting with those exquisitely languishing eyes—a balmy breath from those cherub lips, that fell upon his cheek as he stooped to address her, completed Drogo’s conquest and enchantment. He might go a longer journey than from the Adriatic to the northern ocean, and he would not efface the deep impression: he might be surrounded in his father’s hall by unwilling relatives, who would fain prevent his expatriation; but Zoe’s attraction would not fail—he would soon be again in Italy.

With this conviction on their minds, Melo and his brother-in-law hastened to conclude their negotiations with the Normans, and to send Drogo on his way. The pilgrims were easily persuaded,

when informed of such a part of their plans as Drogo and Melo thought fit to confide to them, to stay as soldiers ; and before the hour of noon, the enamoured warrior and his aged companion, mounted on strong steeds, and well furnished with money, were descending Mount Garganus by an opposite and a much easier road than the one by which they had come.

As romantic as this were the circumstances and the invitation that brought the descendants of the warriors of the snowy mountains of Norway into Italy ; and the splendid romance of the Normans' history has no pages brighter than those which describe the wonderful conquests that resulted from their visit. In a few years the successors of the poor pilgrims we have seen toiling towards the sanctuary of Saint Michael were counts of provinces, independent princes, kings ; and while England, our native country, fell to a Norman dynasty, the same heroic race established themselves as sovereigns in the whole of the south of Italy and the island of Sicily—regions (among the most fertile and beautiful of earth) which now form the Kingdom of Naples. A cotemporary writer, Nigellus, the poetical biographer of Louis, the French King, has left us the following quaint but characteristic portrait of this extraordinary people :—

“*Nort quoque Francisco dicuntur nomine manni.  
Veloces, agiles, armigerique nimis ;  
Ipse quidem populus latè pernotus habetur,  
Lintre dapes quærit, incolit atque mare.  
Pulcher adest facie, vultuque statuque decorus.*”\*

And an English historian of our own days† has so concisely and admirably traced the early history of the Normans, and their first contact with the nations of Europe, that we can in no ways do so well as in using his words.

“The pirates of the north were known generally by the name of Normans. The love of a predatory life seems to have attracted adventurers of different nations to the Scandinavian seas, from

\* Nigell. lib. iv.

† Mr. Hallam, “History of Europe in the Middle Ages.”

whence they infested, not only by maritime piracy, but continual invasions, the northern coasts both of France and Germany. The causes of their sudden appearance are inexplicable, or at least could only be sought in the ancient traditions of Scandinavia. For undoubtedly the coasts of France and England were as little protected from depredation under the Merovingian Kings, and those of the heptarchy, as in subsequent times. Yet only one instance of an attack from this side is recorded, and that before the middle of the sixth century, till the age of Charlemagne. In 787, the Danes, as we called those northern plunderers, began to infest England, which lay most immediately open to their incursions. Soon afterwards they ravaged the coasts of France. Charlemagne repulsed them by means of his fleets; yet they pillaged a few places during his reign. In Louis's reign their depredations upon the coasts were more incessant, but they did not penetrate into the inland country till that of Charles the Bald. The Normans adopted a uniform plan of warfare both in France and England: sailing up navigable rivers in their vessels of small burden, and fortifying the islands which they occasionally found, they made these intrenchments at once an asylum for their women and children, a repository for their plunder, and a place of retreat from superior force. After pillaging a town, they retired to these strongholds, or to their ships; and it was not till 872 that they ventured to keep possession of Angers, which, however, they were compelled to evacuate. Sixteen years afterwards they laid siege to Paris, and committed the most ruinous devastations on the neighbouring country. As these Normans (as pagans) were unchecked by religious awe, the rich monasteries, which had stood harmless amidst the havoc of Christian war, were overwhelmed in the storm. Perhaps they may have endured some irrecoverable losses of ancient learning; but their complaints are of monuments disfigured, bones of saints and kings dispersed, treasures carried away. All the chief abbeys were stripped about the same time, either by the enemy, or for contributions to the public necessity. The Kings of France, too feeble to prevent or repel these invaders, had recourse to the palliative of buying peace at their hands, or, rather

precarious armistices, to which reviving thirst for plunder soon put an end.

At length Charles the Simple, in 918, ceded a great province, which they had already partly occupied, partly rendered desolate, and which has derived from them the name of Normandy. Ignominious as this appears, it proved no impolitic step. Rollo, the Norman chief, with all his subjects, became Christians and Frenchmen; and the kingdom was at once relieved from a terrible enemy, and strengthened by a race of hardy colonists.

The followers of Rollo, who rested from plunder and piracy in the quiet possession of Normandy, became devout professors of the Christian faith, and particularly addicted to pilgrimages, which gratified their curiosity and spirit of adventure. In small bodies, well armed, on account of the lawless character of the countries through which they passed, the Norman pilgrims visited the shrines of Italy, and even the Holy Land.\* The band of which the adventurous Drogo, the hero of our tale, was the leader, was one of these devout incorporations; and there appears no ground of suspecting that their visit to Mount Garganus had any other motive than had been owned by many who had preceded them in Italy.

Little more than two months had elapsed since the pilgrim's interview with the disaffected Melo in the cave of St. Michael, when a warrior was seen to issue from a castle in Normandy, and impetuously to urge forward his noble steed. The animal was spirited, and seemed more than to participate in his master's impatience: he bit his curb, and would have galloped down a steep declivity. The cavalier reined him, and this so suddenly, and with such strength, that the fine creature was thrown back upon his haunches. A lovely female rushed from a thicket by the roadside, accosting the daring rider, and at the sight of his accident a

\* Or in the splendid diction of Gibbon: "In this active devotion their minds and bodies were invigorated by exercise: danger was the incentive, novelty the recompense; and the prospect of the world was decorated by wonder, credulity, and ambitious hope. They confederated for their mutual defence; and the robbers of the Alps, who had been allured by the garb of a pilgrim, were often chastised by the arm of a warrior."—*Decline and Fall*, ch. lvi.

half-suppressed cry of alarm burst from her. The warrior did not appear affected by the lady's beauty so much as might have been expected. He scarcely bowed to her, but continued to spur his horse, that after several efforts and plunges, in which he had nearly fallen on his flank, recovered his hinder legs.

Then the warrior waved a brief, almost a stern adieu, and would have dashed forward.

"Not so—not so!" cried the lady; and she caught the reins, and stood before the steed, so that he could not proceed without trampling on the gentle form that strove to detain him. "Oh! yet one word!—a fond farewell! I feel I shall never see you—never see you more!"

The generous animal piaffed on the spot where he had fallen; the warrior bent over his neck, and grasping the lady's hand, said, in a tone in which there was more of impatience than tenderness, "Well, then, again farewell! Silly girl! why thus prolong the pains of parting?"

"We shall never meet again on earth!" cried the lady, and her arms dropped helplessly to her sides.

A touch of the rein and heel, and the courser had his way clear before him. The warrior shouted another adieu, and trotted down the hill, while the lovely and afflicted female, voiceless and motionless, stood on the spot where he had disengaged himself from her, with her eyes fixed on his fast disappearing figure.

The warrior was Drogo, and the female a sister of nearly his own age—the companion of his childhood, his dearest favourite, until Zoe, the daughter of Melo, had engrossed all the affections of his heart. He had succeeded in his mission even beyond his expectations; he had fanned a spark of enterprise to a blaze, and was now hastening to rejoin a formidable corps of gallant Normans, whom, with flattering prospects and assurance of success, he had raised for the service of the revolted noble of Bari. The majority of these men were his equals, and followed him as such, aspiring at the same rewards for their valour, and unwilling to acknowledge any other subordination than what might be expedient or indispensable on the field of battle. The rest, of meaner birth and

poorer fortunes, were retained by pay ; but even they hoped, with their sword and lance, to cut out for themselves fair possessions in the land of the Pope and the Saints.

The intrepid band thus freely associated for the deliverance of Apulia, passed the Alps by separate roads, and in the disguise of pilgrims ; but in the neighbourhood of Rome they were saluted by the Chief of Bari, who supplied the more indigent with arms and horses, and instantly prepared to lead them to the field of action.\* By the banks of the Tiber, Drogo again saw the fascinating Zoe, who had lost none of her charms since he left her. After a few days' stay, rendered an elysium by her occasional society, he repaired to the field, where his heroic achievements were to win her for his bride. The name and character of the rapidly changing scenes of our Norman's adventures may add to the interest and romance of his history. It was on the vast Apulian plain, and on the memorable field of Cannæ, where Hannibal triumphed over the Romans, that Drogo, unacquainted with, and indifferent to ancient glory, found himself at last in presence of an enemy he had so long and ardently desired to meet.

The Ofantus, that had reflected the arms, and been tinged with the blood of Romans and Carthaginians, now rolled its tranquil waters between Greeks and Normans, and the other confederates of Melo ; but the river, as if the physical had accorded itself to the moral world, was diminished from what it is described as being in ancient days, even as the cause now to be decided on its banks, and the armies to engage, were inferior in magnitude to those involved in the *certamen* of the son of Hamilcar, and the consuls Æmilius and Terentius Varro.

The Greek empire at this period (the beginning of the eleventh century) still retained some of the provinces of southern Italy, which were *misgoverned* by a lieutenant, styled Catapan, who resided at Bari ; but so weak and demoralized was that empire, that only an army inconsiderable in number and contemptible in quality, could be raised to defend Apulia. The forces of Melo were in-

\* Gibbon, Muratori, &c.

comparably less, and it was on one hundred and fifty, or at most two hundred Normans that he relied for victory; nor was he mistaken in their efficacy and valour. At the first sound of the trumpet, they dashed through the river, and charged the enemy with their strong lances. The Greeks were presently disordered, routed; and Drogo, after performing prodigies of valour, finished the business of the day by transfixing the flying and recreant Catapan. We may draw a veil over the carnage that accompanied victory, for the Normans were as yet a cruel race. They had embraced the Christian religion; but even as the Greeks had communicated to that religion of simplicity and truth their scholastic subtleties,—as the Egyptians and Syrians had given to it their contemplative character and their ascetic morals; so, when these people of the North professed Christianity, that religion became for them sombre and bloody, in imitation of that of Odin, their ancient faith.\*

The resources of the Greeks were, however, not yet exhausted, and Melo had neither the warlike engines nor numbers sufficient to undertake the siege of Bari, or of any of the other cities held by the Empire on those coasts. He was, moreover, deceived in the spirit of the people, who, instead of rising and uniting themselves with him against their oppressors, stood aloof as timid spectators. In fine, the victory of Cannæ had done nothing but display the headlong valour of Drogo and his Normans; and shortly afterwards another Greek army, superior in number, command, and appointment to the first, offered them battle in the same plain. In this second engagement they were overwhelmed by the numbers, and still more by the military engines of the Greeks; and when all their allies had fled from the field, the Normans indignantly retreated with their faces to the enemy. Their loss, for the force they brought into the field, was great, nor did Drogo escape without many wounds. But the sons of Rollo were not men to be depressed by a calamity, however great and unexpected. They had seen the division and weakness, the



fertility and wealth of Italy ; their arms could defray the expenses of a march, and they hastened to offer the service of their formidable sword and lance to such of the princes of the south of Italy as could best pay them.

Drogo, unassailed by reproaches, and still accompanied by a few of his friends, took the road to Rome with Melo and his brother-in-law, Datto, the father of the fair Zoe.

When the young Norman reached the spot where she whom he had hoped on returning to call his own resided, he was made to feel the full extent of the misfortune of his defeat. Though he had fought for their cause with a devotion and courage that might merit every reward, still the conditions with Melo and Datto depended on success. They were beaten and fugitives, with exhausted means, and he an adventurer, with no establishment to offer a lovely bride who had hitherto lived in affluence and splendour. The separation of the confederates, if not perfectly sincere on the side of the nobles of Bari, wore the appearance at least of frankness and friendship. Melo, with that untiring zeal and energy which distinguished many of the Italian conspirators or revolutionists of the middle ages, determined to hasten to Germany, to solicit the aid of the Emperor against the Greeks. Datto, who could not remain in safety where he was, prepared to retire with his daughter, under the protection of the powerful Athenulf, the Abbot of Monte Casino ; and it was arranged that Drogo should seek service at Rome, where the Pope was trembling at an alliance between the Greeks and the Prince of Capua, which threatened the territories of the Church. He was flattered with the hope that Melo would soon return with an army, and that he, who in the meanwhile might succeed in winning over some of the many martial pilgrims, his countrymen, that every season saw flocking into Italy, should have a distinguished post in that army, and another chance of gaining his bride, with the means of providing for her. Drogo could scarcely murmur or object ; but when, on taking leave of the gentle Zoe, he saw tears swimming in her exquisite black eyes, and other tokens of sorrow—of love—he could not help proposing to the innocent girl that she should leave all and flee with him.

Filial affection triumphed over the passion which had indeed found its way into her young heart. She did not speak of the privations and perils that must attend her as the wife of a wandering soldier, whose fortune was on his sword—she did not think of them. But she thought of the disappointment and wretchedness of a parent who was now bereft of everything but her; and she said, decidedly, though her voice trembled, “Oh, no! no! I cannot leave my poor father—alone in the midst of his misfortunes!”

The heart of our hero, though somewhat of the rudest, could respect so generous and sacred a feeling. He gazed once more in her melting eyes—once more he pressed her trembling hand to his breast, and then with a farewell and a blessing, he mounted his charger, to seek in scenes of violence and blood, the means which might promote his union with so much beauty and gentleness.

The fortunes of Drogo differed little from those of several who had been his associates, and of many who followed him to the field of Italy, where, though not under the name of *condottieri*, they played a part those mercenaries repeated in the fourteenth century. The Pope, the Princes of Capua, Beneventum, Salerno, and Naples, alternately subsidized them for their domestic quarrels: the superior spirit and discipline of the Normans gave victory to the side which they espoused; and their cautious policy observed the balance of power, lest the preponderance of any rival state should render their aid less important and their service less profitable.\* But Italy was weaker than in the fourteenth century: the Normans were united among themselves, animated by a spirit infinitely superior to that of the *condottieri*; and while serving as mercenaries, they always aspired to the possession of a separate state, and to their formation in Italy as a nation. And both were soon theirs.

The sort of life led by these soldiers of fortune, their unrestrained licence in the field or in the camp, were not of a nature favourable to gentle feeling or romantic passion; but Drogo, while he indulged as his comrades did, would still feel the inferiority of his rude

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\* Gibbon.

enjoyments to that happiness which he had promised himself, when, full of hope and the image of Melo's daughter, he first departed from Monte Gargano. At the festive board, or in the midnight watch, during the long march, and even in the moment of victory, that lovely and gentle image would frequently fill his imagination, and correct his inclinations to evil. It was the remembrance of Zoe that made his heart thrill as the cry of women in some captured town would meet his ear ; and to her innocence and beauty, as cherished and worshipped in the Norman's heart, many a helpless, shrieking female was indebted for the interference and protection of Drogo.

Many months had passed and he had learned nothing of his former confederates,—had never heard *her* name, save in the whispers of his own heart, when one night, as unattended he was returning from a ride to a tower he then commanded, on the frontier of the Roman states, a voice of ill omen—a voice from an invisible person, struck his ear. "Poor Drogo, the Norman, expects the return of Melo, and the hand of his fair niece!—and Melo is dead on the banks of the Danube, and Zoe beset by dangers on the banks of the Garigliano!"

"Ha! what say you?" cried Drogo, looking in the direction whence the voice proceeded, and where he saw nothing but a row of poplar trees gently waving in the night breeze.

"If Drogo hasten not to her aid, the fair Zoe will be soon the bride of another—perhaps of death!" replied the same solemn voice.

"Of death!—Zoe!" murmured the Norman, who, hardy as he was, now shook in his saddle ;—"but tell me," he cried, recovering himself, "who is it that thus speaks to me without showing himself?"

"One whose presence here must not be known,—one who has done his duty, and now retires," said the same voice, but which seemed to proceed from a greater distance than when it had first spoken.

The Norman turned his compact, active palfrey suddenly from the road, behind the trees—he rode along them, glancing his keen

eye in their shadow : no living object was there, save a green lizard gliding in the moonbeams : he darted across the heath beyond the poplars, but he could discover nothing, and retraced his way to the tower, doubting at times whether his imagination had not framed the alarming dialogue ; at others, whether he had not heard a voice from another world. Whatever might be the nature of the warning, his heart's affections would not permit him to disregard it ; and Drogo's deeds were as precipitate and decided as his thoughts. From the garrison of the tower he selected his bravest and most trusty followers, and the best of the war-horses, and with these set out before midnight, with the determination of reaching Monte Casino by a rapid march. Familiar by this time with every remote tract across the desolated plains of the Campagna, and all the passes and intricacies of the mountains that form the strong but ill-defended frontier of the present kingdom of Naples ; accustomed to follow without inquiry or misgiving their bold and youthful commander, ever happy to find themselves on a secret and adventurous expedition, the Normans pushed gaily forward ; and while Drogo thought of Zoe and sighed to the moon, they shook their lances in her beams, and cheered their way with a rude national song.

From the snow-cover'd mountains of Norway afar,  
Our fathers descended, and rush'd to the war :  
No fortunes had they, save the lances we hold ;  
But a lance is a realm in the hands of the bold.

They charged on the foe, and their steeds were a bark ;  
They scour'd the North ocean, so dreary and dark.  
On England's white cliffs, and the shores of the main,  
'Midst the wind and the storm, and the sleet and the rain.

Their bark and their lance gain'd the prize that they sought,  
And the fair blue-eyed maidens were sold and were bought ;  
While the rich city pillaged, the strong tower in flame,  
Spread afar o'er the nations the dread of their name.

Old Rollo reposed from the strife and the toil ;  
But a province of beauty, and fertile the soil,  
Was the meed of his valour in fair Normandie,  
Where the friends of our youth and our kindred be.

And now we are marching in lands fairer far,  
 Nor will victory yet pale the glow of her star ;  
 We have cross'd the high Alps and the Apennines twain,  
 How oft have we conquer'd !—we'll conquer again !

We have drunk of the Tiber, the Arno, the Po,  
 The Adige, the Tara—and better, I trow,  
 Of Italy's wines, where most generous they run,  
 As clear as her skies, and as warm as her sun.

We have woo'd and have won the dark maidens of Rome.  
 —Who thinks of the pale cheeks abandon'd at home?—  
 When eyes beam on his, all so warm and so black,  
 Oh ! what eye, cold and blue, can e'er summon him back ?

Then on, Comrades, on !—with a lance and a steed,  
 We never can know either fear or a need.  
 Let Drogo still lead us by night and by day,  
 'Tis to conquest and triumph—Hurra ! and Hurra !

At the morning dawn the Norman troop stopped at a retired mountain-hamlet, where they found provisions for themselves and horses ; and after two or three hours' repose—that short and sweet repose which none enjoy so fully as the tired soldier, or hardy traveller,—they again mounted and continued their march. Their road lay through mountainous regions, singularly wild and picturesque, but thinly inhabited by a pastoral people, who here and there were seen, in their sheepskin jackets and caps, looking out from some wild wood, or down from the ridge of some hill, on the gallant Norman band, whose physiognomy, arms, and horses, evidently excited their simple astonishment and admiration.

By the hour of noon they had descended into a vast plain, through which more than one stately river was seen flowing towards the clear blue waves of the Tyrrhenian Sea, that skirted the horizon, dotted at intervals with a little island, that seemed floating between the waters and the sky. Here they again halted in the rear of a small walled town, which was evidently thrown into consternation by their approach. Drogo had not said a word as to the object of this sudden expedition, or the place of its destination ; but when they now remounted, he cried out cheerily, "To the left, my merry men !—a light hand on the rein, and we shall soon be at Monte Casino !"

"What! has the wealthy Abbot fallen into some new scrape, or are we *riding* a pilgrimage?" *thought* the Normans; but they only gave utterance to a cheerful hurra! as they obeyed their leader's command.

As the sun was sinking in the west, the band indeed approached the detached, abrupt mountain on which that far-famed monastery of Saint Benedict is situated.

At the foot of the Mount, and immediately under the sacred edifice, was the little city of Saint Germano, with crenelated walls, turrets, and a rude castle on a rock behind it; whilst in front of the town, as if to add at once to its beauty and its strength, there flowed a clear, deep river—one of the most important tributaries to the Garigliano, or classical Liris. Nearer at hand, on the roots of the mountain, were scattered the melancholy ruins of the ancient city of Cassinium, among which, however, still remained, (as they even now remain,) in tolerable preservation, an amphitheatre, and a small Roman temple, converted into a Christian church. The Normans hailed the lofty monastery as the pilgrims had done at the sight of the shrine of Saint Michael, for the place was almost as sacred. In a few minutes they reached the bridge over the river, by which the town was approached; it was defended by a tower, whose garrison was far from being inclined to dispute the passage, for they turned out and welcomed the brave Drogo by name and acclamations. They were Normans like themselves, though in the pay of the great Abbot; and the rest of their members in the town received the gallant captain and his troop with the same feeling, and with just as little inquiry as to the motives that brought them thither.

After a short and private conversation with the leader of the Abbot's war-like subsidiaries, during which Drogo betrayed extreme agitation, the troop passed through the town, which rose on the acclivity of the hill, and emerged from it, by an upper gate, to the rough sides of the mountain. It was with difficulty that their tired steeds clambered up the narrow and steep path, which was entirely over a naked rock; but they had not proceeded far when they were stopped by an outer line of walls, built by the

Benedictines to defend their wealthy and often pillaged retreat. The warden at the gate, surprised and alarmed at their sudden appearance, demanded their business.

"We would have speech with your Lord Abbot—instantly throw open your gate!" cried Drogo, in a voice of thunder.

"I dare not do so much," replied the trembling Italian, "without my superior's orders."

"Then will we climb your paltry walls in a trice," said Drogo, dismounting, and by a sign ordering his men to do the same.

"You will hardly, gallant warrior, offer such an insult to our Lord Abbot and our holy brotherhood, who are all the friends of the brave Normans," said the warden in a conciliating tone.

Drogo paused; the flush of anger passed from his bold and handsome countenance, and he said mildly, "Then send and advise the Abbot, that—that Drogo the Norman, and his friend, would have immediate speech with him!"

"But," replied hesitatingly the old warden, who was accustomed to, and who revered, the machine-like regularity of the monastic life and occupation,—“but, gentle Sir, vespers have been but just sung, and his reverence will have retired to make his evening repast, and——”

"Hark ye! churlish doorkeeper to a monk!" cried Drogo—and the angry tint again came to his face; "mine is a business to be delayed neither by an abbot's prayers nor his supper! Do my bidding and summon him here, or I will scale your walls, and hang you from their top!"

"Misericordia! patience! your will shall be done, noble Sirs!" cried the timid warden, who at once dispatched a youth with Drogo's message, enjoining him to make all possible haste.

In a short time, though it seemed an age to the impetuous Norman, a group of figures were seen descending from the elevated monastery, their steps being lighted by torches; for the rapid twilight of the south had already passed, and the moon had not yet risen. Drogo fixed his impatient eyes in the direction of the lights, which now would be seen flickering along the precipitous and uneven path, and now would disappear behind some

projecting rock, or group of hardy trees that grew on the mountain's side, with an alternation almost like that of the stern-lights of a convoying ship tossed in a stormy sea. By degrees the torches cast broader and and clearer rays; the figures in the group, at first but dark, moving masses, were more distinctly marked out; and at last, as they descended a *ramp* only a few paces from the wall, Drogo could distinguish a stately old personage bearing a crosier in his right hand, and four other individuals clad like him, in the black robes and white cowl of the Benedictines. "Tis the Father Abbot," thought the Normans, and they prepared themselves for the performance of those genuflexions and crossings which were much used at the time by the profane on meeting one of the dignified servants of the Church, and by these soldiers of fortune as much as by any other class of Catholics, though on slight provocation they would cudgel the priest they had just knelt to, pillage his church, and make a bonfire of his Madonna and saints. Even Drogo, proud and fiery as he was, bent his knee as the Benedictines approached the grate through which he had parleyed with the warden, and humbly craved a benediction.

The stately bearer of the crosier made a sign of the cross in the air, in the direction of the kneeling Normans, and muttered a "benedicite." Drogo, having shown his devotion, proceeded at once to business.

"My Lord Abbot," said he, speaking rapidly, "I have come a long journey to ask a few questions, but those questions are of importance. Tell me, then. What of the noble Melo?—where is Datto, with his daughter, who claimed your protection?"

The bearer of the crosier put a finger across his lips, as if asking silence, and replied with the utmost phlegm.

"Brave warrior! I am not the Lord Abbot, but his sub—his *locum tenens*—for this emergency, and sent to represent him; for he has the sciatica, and our roads are none of the best; and to invite you, brave warrior! with one such fitting companion as you may choose, to partake of the hospitality of our house."

"If I suspect that treachery has been practised here against  
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your guests, would it be wise in me to trust myself in your hands with only one follower?" said Drogo, fixing his penetrating eyes on the emotionless countenance of the monk.

"My son! can you harbour doubts of the faith—the tender mercies of Mother Church?"

"Humph! I have seen some of the servants of Mother Church do strange deeds!"

"When did the followers of Saint Benedict do injury to the Normans?"

"I have seen the dagger drawn from under the monk's frock," continued Drogo, as if not heeding the words of his interlocutor,—"and I have *heard* of poisons administered—ay, even in the sacred chalice!"

"By the crosier of my Lord Abbot that I bear! and by this cross!" said the monk, composedly, "the brave Drogo may trust himself to our friendly keeping. We might have been less particular in our numbers, and all your followers might have been welcome;—but in truth, our provisions run short, our cook is ill of a fever; and indeed we have seen such indecorous squabbles, when a number of soldiers have been admitted to our wine-cellars, that——"

"It is enough!" cried Drogo, who might rely on the pledge of the cross, and on the Norman force in the service of the monastery, and in full command of the town.—"Gaimar! you remain with me; the rest to horse!—my friend Rainolph will provide for ye within the walls of San Germano:—Be quiet!" he added in an under tone of voice, to one of the adventurers nearest to him—"behave yourselves in an exemplary manner while under the nose of the Abbot, and to-morrow you shall all, in small parties at a time, visit the monastery and the shrine."

"We leave you in safety?" said the soldier, inquiringly.

"Perfectly so!" replied Drogo, in the same low tone: "only, if the monks should play me false, remember not to leave a head on their shoulders, nor one stone upon another of the monastery here above our heads:—Now, march!"

The Normans always obeyed their young commander, as if in-

stinctively. They slowly descended to the town, and Drogo and his companion were admitted within the monastic precincts, where the Abbot's representative gave them the kiss of peace. The warriors leading their horses by the head, and taking the necessary care of them on such a rude path, followed the monks and torch-bearers. They soon came to another line of wall, and passed through a narrow gate defended by a small round tower that stood on the edge of a tremendous precipice. Their feet were now on holy ground—every rock, every stone had been consecrated by the presence and the prayers and penitence of Saint Benedict, who had resided so many years on this mountain-top, where he laid the foundation of that order which was to become so powerful and to exercise so beneficial an influence on the civilization of the world. Numerous wooden crosses, erected by the monks, pointed out the spots most sanctified—the scenes of the legends, which, with eager tongues, they now expounded to the wondering Normans. On this rock the Mother of God had smiled with ineffable glory, and benignity on the saint, and conversed with him face to face;—on this, angels had administered to his material wants, when all the world abandoned him;—and from this he had cast the Evil One, who in person tampered with his soul, headlong down a yawning gulf.—Here, where the mountain was rudest, where the rock was hardest, had he been wont to kneel and pray for long, long hours—for days! And the granite was deeply worn, and retained the impression of his knees and his hands. The Normans devoutly kissed the senseless stones. Had it been light, they might have seen from that rugged brow of the hill a prospect of such sublimity and beauty as would have informed even their rude souls that the saint had well chosen his oratory.\*

They were now at the entrance of the monastery, which lay through a long narrow tunnel, excavated in the solid rock, and secured at either end by a massy gate bound with iron bars, and thickly studded with knobs of iron. As the red torch-light but

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\* The scenery about Monte Casino is among the finest of Italy; but that of the Monastery of "La Cava," also of the Benedictine order, and in the kingdom of Naples, is still finer.

very impartially dissipated the eternal gloom of the place, it looked more like the porch to regions of horror and guilt than the avenue to a peaceful monastery. So thought the Normans ; but their spirits revived when they found themselves fairly within the holy edifice, and traversing a spacious corridor illuminated with many lamps, in which burned the fragrant oil of the southern olive. From the corridor they turned into a spacious hall, where several monks and domestics seemed to be in waiting. It was curious to observe—what, however, was common in monastic establishments in those lawless, violent times—the intermixture of objects of devotion with weapons of war. On the walls were hung swords and lances, crucifixes and images of the saints ; whilst several of the men there assembled bore in person and demeanour sufficient evidence that they were equally capable of using either class of that furniture. At the end of this hall was a door opening into another apartment occupied by the Abbot, into which Drogo would at once have followed his reverend conductor ; but the monk begged him to wait until he should announce him, and hear his superior's will. This trifling check was enough to move the bile of the impatient and irritable Norman. He bit the shaft of the lance which he still carried in his hand ; he cast a look of scorn on the monks, who seemed watching his actions ; and before he was summoned, he threw open the door, and, striding across the room, knelt before the Lord Abbot with but small humility in his heart. The dignified ecclesiastic extended his hand for the warrior to kiss, and bade him welcome by name, and the endearing appellation of son. Drogo arose, and his conductor left the room.

“We were aware of your coming, brave Norman !” said the Abbot ; “we expected you.”

“Ah !—expected me !” cried Drogo in astonishment, “then may you know the object of my hasty, and, to me, most unexpected journey ?”

“Assuredly I do : it is——” The Abbot paused.

“To demand of you, my Lord Abbot, an account of your guests ! Ay ! where are Datto and his daughter ?”

Some troublesome emotion seemed to agitate the Benedictine, and he merely echoed the Norman's "Where?"

"Yes, monk!—my Lord Abbot—I ask of you where are they? They sought of you an asylum: your faith was pledged for their preservation; and a secret, an invisible voice—I know not whether from heaven or hell—has announced to my ear that Datto—that Zoe—are beset by dangers on the banks of the Garigliano!"

"Alas! it is even so!" said the Benedictine.

"Then have you betrayed your trust!" cried Drogo; and as he thought of his lovely, his once promised bride, and spoke, his voice and form trembled with wrath. "You have expelled them from your stronghold!—you have given them up defenceless to their enemies! Now for this, dread the Norman's revenge! By the rood! I will so use the fire and the sword, that ye shall wish the Lombards or the Saracens back among you instead of me!"

"Impetuous young man!—impetuous and unjust!" said the Abbot, over whose pale and languid countenance, which betrayed present or recent suffering, a slight flush of anger passed, "you wrong me with your suspicions—you insult me with your menaces; but I can forgive you as a churchman and a Christian ought!" He raised to his lips a golden cross which was suspended from his neck by a chain of the same metal, and then continued:—

"It was not at my compulsion, but against my advice and entreaties, that sometime since Datto withdrew himself and his fair daughter from this holy asylum. But his restless mind could not brook our inactivity, and he went and joined a Norman band employed by the Pope to garrison the tower of the Garigliano. He is still there, and Zoe is with him; and it is because dangers, from which I would save them, are gathering around them, that you were warned."

"Then that invisible voice?" interrupted Drogo.

"Proceeded from my secret and skilful agent. With the duties of my post at heart, I could not, at a moment like the present, when the walls of the blessed Saint Benedict, and his children entrusted to my care, are threatened not only by the schismatic Greeks, but by a number of neighbouring princes allied

with them, openly call in your aid for the revolutionist, or, as they call him, the traitor Datto, whose destruction they are determined on; since, now that his brother is no more, (for my envoy will have told you aright, Melo has ended his life a suppliant at the court of Germany,\*) the Greeks imagine, in his death, they can finish a faction which has cost them so much trouble. Nor would it have been befitting in me to withdraw from the Pope's service the brave Drogo and his followers."

The violent but not ungenerous Norman had been for some time blushing at his suspicions and intemperance. He now threw himself at the feet of the Abbot. He expressed his penitence in energetic terms. He obtained a ready pardon; and not till then did he inquire into the precise condition of the fair Zoe.

"In these stirring and treacherous times," said the Abbot, "when it is difficult to know one's friends from one's foes, I have found it expedient for the interests of the order whose unworthy head I am, to maintain in different parts certain emissaries, who may keep me informed of passing events and varying politics; and from one of these I have recently learned that the Greek commander Bojano has gained over, by force of gold, Pandolph, the Prince of Capua, who, indifferent to the honour and interest of the Pope, is at this moment secretly preparing an armament to attack his tower on the Garigliano, and there to secure Datto."†

"Merciful heaven!" cried the Norman, who too well knew the perfidy of the Greeks, and the habitual atrocities committed on such occasions, not to fear the worst; "what will become of the gentle Zoe! I will fly at once to her rescue!"

"With tired men and jaded horses?—that can hardly be," said the Abbot mildly.

Drogo felt the impossibility; and striking his burning forehead with his hand, he paced the room with impatient steps, like an imprisoned lion whose bars prevent him from rushing to the object of his love or his hate. The Abbot endured some trouble ere he could calm him, and make him believe or hope that by departing

\* Gibbon.

† Bossi, *Storie d' Italia*, lib. iv. cap. xvii.

on the following morning he might reach the tower of the Garigliano before the armament of the Prince of Capua. The Benedictine had other matters to explain. When Drogo recovered his composure, he informed him that a secret emissary had repaired to Rome to put the Pope on his guard against the Greeks and their confederates, whilst other and conciliatory means were in preparation to be employed on the Prince of Capua. If Drogo and his men could throw themselves into the tower, with such a reinforcement the place might be maintained until art and negotiation had effected their objects, and then Zoe, and even her obnoxious father, might be saved. But on all these important points the Norman was bound to observe the profoundest secrecy, and to betray to no one the part played in the dangerous drama by the Abbot of Monte Casino.

After this long and private audience, the Abbot, giving him his benediction, recommended Drogo to the hospitality of the monastery, and to a sturdy friar, who at once conducted him to a well-covered table in the refectory, where his follower Gaimar, with eager appetite, was waiting for him to commence operations. Though the monks' cookery was irreproachable, and the wine excellent, Drogo did not enjoy his supper, and he soon retired to the cell prepared for him, enjoining Gaimar to have the horses saddled by morning dawn. He had not slept the preceding night; his fatigue, since he left the tower at the summons of the secret voice, had been great even for a Norman soldier, yet still the agitation of his mind long kept him from sleeping. When he *did* sleep, he was visited by troubled visions. A tower in flames, and friends within, and *she* shrieking for help—a battle and a headlong charge—a dastard Greek carrying off the beautiful Zoe as his prize, and she stretching out her struggling arms and calling on Drogo, were depicted in those dreams with the intenseness and vividness of reality. He rejoiced when the grey dawn appeared, and with its first gleaming in the east rose from his uneasy couch and sought his companion. Gaimar was already at the door with the refreshed steeds; and without waiting for the matins of the monks, and merely bidding a hasty farewell to the lay brothers and

domestics who had risen, the Normans, carefully leading their horses, descended from the monastery.

As they passed the rocks and the crosses where they had paused the preceding evening, they might again have been impressed with the sanctity of Monte Casino ; but as they wended on their way, they gave no thought, for they could not appreciate them, to the important labours in the service of mankind that were there prosecuted by some of the monks. *Our* attention however, and *our* gratitude, are due to the Benedictines, who were foremost among those of the dark ages who struggled to preserve the remains of light and civilization. In their monasteries of Monte Casino and La Cava, ancient manuscripts were carefully preserved, which elsewhere would have been torn, or devoted to the flames, as things valueless ; and their persevering industry multiplied the copies of the immortal compositions of Ancient Greece and Rome, when there was no press and no reading public. Yes, honour to those “inglorious benefactors of mankind, who, while all Christendom slumbered, were occupied in providing oil for the lamps of learning and religion, half unconscious of the greatness of their calling ! In the list of those who have deserved well of mankind, who shall we say have stronger claims than they ? and yet they exhibit the solitary instance of a class of men, whose common services will be recognised wherever civilization and knowledge spread, without one single individual being enrolled among the famous of the earth. It is owing perhaps to this want of *individual fame*, that so little attention has ever been awakened to all that is worthy of notice in their history, their labours, their habits, their place in society, and the cities and monasteries ennobled by their art.”\* But, to return to objects of a far different character :—When Drogo reached the town of San Germano, he soon summoned his troop to horse ; and referring them to some future day for the gratification of curiosity and devotion they had promised themselves at Monte Casino, and after consulting awhile with the commander of the Abbot’s Norman garrison, he again headed his not unwilling followers in the march.

\* London Review, No. 2.

The sun was sinking behind the purple mountains before the warriors came in sight of the ancient tower that stood stark and solitary on the banks of the Garigliano, like a giant eyeing himself in the mirror of its tranquil waters. Drogo bent his keen eye on the edifice, and then on every neighbouring point.

"Vive Dieu !" cried he joyfully, "all is well !—we come in time !" And then pointing to the tower with his lance, he first gave his men a notion of what business they were employed on. The information he chose to impart was brief, but satisfactory : a band of bold Normans were threatened in yon fortress with a siege by the detested Greeks, and it behoved them to rescue or assist their countrymen. His troop set up a gay shout, and waved their lances over their heads. But they had soon to put those lances in rest. The echoes of their shouts had scarcely died away when a mass of infantry was seen cautiously to emerge from the shelter of a hill that lay a little in advance, and to the left of the Normans ; and when they had reconnoitred for a moment, that mass deployed in such a mode as to occupy the ground from the river, along whose bank Drogo was advancing, to the base of the hill. The young warrior's eyes flashed fire as he rose on his stirrups, and gazed before and around him, but the brilliant courage of his race never forsook him.

"Fiat voluntas Dei !" he exclaimed : "our march is not to be so clear as I had expected. The river is too deep to ford ; we have no way but straight before us. Then on, my comrades, with Saint Benedict to our aid."

It was a spirit-stirring sight to see that small and gallant troop of cavaliers dash forward to the numerous and well-posted infantry :—to see their noble steeds, though after so long a march, partake in the ardour of their riders. The Greeks at once opened to their charge ; and Drogo, with Gaimar and half of his men, cleared the obstruction, but the infantry closed round the rest of the Normans, and it was necessary for the young hero to make a retrograde attack, to disengage them. Again had his lance its usual effect and success ; but, the moment he had reunited his brave followers, the feet of his horse were hampered by some machine thrown by the Greeks, and he staggered and fell. The infantry summoned cou-



rage to rush on the prostrate chief, whose followers, however, formed round him with the speed of lightning, and their lances were an impenetrable barrier to the hundreds by which they were pressed. Drogo recovered his steed ; and when his voice was heard once more cheering on his Normans, they made another of their impetuous charges, which carried them beyond the enemy. With a shout of triumph they pursued their way, at a gentle trot, and, meeting no farther opposition, soon reached the tower of the Garigliano, where they were joyfully welcomed by their countrymen, and by the fugitive Datto, who were but too well aware of the premeditated attack, and had seen with rage and apprehension the Greeks' attempt to intercept what even at a distance they knew to be a plump of Norman spears—an opportune succour.

But it was Datto's gentle daughter that Drogo was most anxious to commune with ; and as soon as a short council was held with the captain of the tower, he sought her in an interior apartment she occupied. Zoe could scarcely believe the evidence of her eyes when, by the last gleams of twilight that entered her narrow lattice, she saw standing before her her gallant lover, who proclaimed he had come for her deliverance, or to die with her. Drogo took her trembling hand—it waxed cold in his ; and the dear object of his solicitude and love fell half-fainting in his arms. She soon recovered, but not before the enamoured Norman had tasted the sweetness of her lips, and had passionately kissed her forehead and her broad, pale eyelids. She withdrew blushing from his embrace, and again her first thought was for her father.

“They are coming upon us—the Greeks in league with the Capuans. Nothing but *his* death will satisfy them. Oh, Drogo ! can you save my father ?” cried she, piteously.

“Fear not, my Zoe !” replied the warrior, in a tone of confidence ; “the walls of this tower are said to be strong, and its garrison is now sufficient in number and dauntless in spirit. There are friends at work for us ; and before our provisions can fail, the beleaguering traitors will be dissipated !”

“But could he not escape hence, before the tower is surrounded ?”

Drogo mused awhile, and then said, "Twere difficult, but not impossible. Your father might flee, but the enemy is already in the immediate neighbourhood."

"Oh ! is there no way open ?" cried Zoe, clasping her hands.

"There might be," replied her lover ; " I have seen but infantry, and that only in one direction. With a swift steed Datto might escape them ; but whither could he go then ? My fair Zoe, he is safer where he is than exposed to treachery and the Greeks and the Prince of Capua abroad. And, my sweet one, you would not bear the pang of parting with your father."

"I would go with him. I would follow him through all his dangers !" said the generous girl.

"His steed might have work that would ill admit of a second rider," replied the Norman, making instinctively the calculations of a cavalier, though he was transported with admiration at so much devotedness and so much spirit in one so fair and delicately formed.

"Hear me, Drogo !" said Zoe, and she grasped the arm of her lover. "I have been too long the daughter of a fugitive—too long accustomed to rapid journeys when life depended on speed—not to know how to sit a fleet horse ! Is there no second steed for me within this fortress ? I will away over plain and mountain with my father !"

But Datto, who entered the apartment at this moment, destroyed her hastily-formed plan, and sank the spirit which had risen so high with hope and filial love, to despondency and alarm. He came to inform Drogo that a considerable force of horse and foot had suddenly appeared, and forming a junction with the Greeks he had contended with, were now encamping round the tower. The Norman left the apartment and hastened to the turrets, while Datto, who remained with his daughter, in reply to the regrets she expressed that her project for quitting the fortress was now rendered abortive, assured her that he never could have attempted its execution ; that he had not a friend to rely on, save these warriors, and with them, whom he had implicated in his evil fortunes, he must triumph or perish.

From the tower's summit Drogo saw more than the confirmation of Datto's report, and his experienced military eye could detect numbers and dispositions that escaped the noble of Bari. The enemy occupied a semicircle that embraced the fortress, their right and left wings resting on the bank of the river. There was no way for the Normans but through their ranks, or across the deep river; and as Drogo reconnoitered, he saw another body of troops advancing to the opposite bank of the Garigliano, who finally stationed themselves opposite the tower, on a rising ground, protected by trees, at scarcely a bow-shot from the river.

"We are indeed surrounded," said the commander of the fortress, as he stood by the side of Drogo; "but they will have hard work ere they drive us whence the Pope has placed us."

"The anathema of Saint Peter will be upon the traitors for the attempt!" said Drogo, who, after he had seen the commander dispose his careful watch for the night, returned to Zoe and her father. We need not describe the conversation of the lovers and the friends, nor the gaities of the Norman soldiers, whose spirits were seldom depressed by the prospect of fighting on the morrow.

When that morrow came, with its earliest light there was motion in the enemy's lines, which, contracting their semicircle, approached nearer and nearer to the tower. They halted at a distance beyond the reach of missiles, whilst a herald advanced to parley with the Norman commander.

"Peace be with you, gallant Sir!" was his salutation.

"This looks not like peace," cried the Norman from his turret, "to close us in as if we were even wild boars destined to afford you chase:—this looks not like peace, to waylay our countrymen as they are coming to visit us:—this looks not like peace to camp round us all night, and not a chief among ye to claim the hospitality of our tower and pledge us in the wine-cup!"

"Peace be with you, gallant Sir!" resumed the herald. "'Tis thus Bojano, the Catapan of the Greek Empire, and Pandolph, the Prince of Capua, my very noble masters, salute you. You have given refuge to an infamous traitor, against their interest and good pleasure; but turn Datto out of your gates, and they ask no

more from you. No ill will ensue to the brave Normans, and the forces you see here will be at once withdrawn."

"We cannot turn out to his enemies a friend to whom we have accorded our hospitality,—and by Rollo, and by all the saints, we will not!"

"Is this your answer to the summons, and——"

"The only answer I deign to give so insulting a demand, except—which you may add—that I bid them beware how they attack a fortress of his Holiness the Pope, garrisoned by Normans!" cried the bold and impatient commander.

"Then will the Catapan and the Prince not move hence until they have razed your tower to the ground, and buried you with your guest in its ruins."

"Hurra!—we defy them. God will defend the right!" exclaimed the Normans unanimously. And thus the conference ended.

Numerous as was the force arrayed against them, and small as was their own garrison, the Normans might well have defended their tower; for, of a certainty (such was the terror their oft-tried valour had inspired), neither Greeks nor Capuans would have been led to an escalade or assault. But the prospect was changed when, shortly after the parley, a variety of battering-rams and other warlike implements, familiar to the more civilized Greeks, but unknown and imposing to the northern warriors, were seen arriving under escort of another strong body of troops. The unfortunate Datto, who saw, in the extent of his enemies' preparations, the fatal importance they attached to the affair, and their resolution to take him, shuddered as he said, pointing to the besieging train, which slowly advanced, drawn by oxen and buffaloes:—"My gallant friends! we must not let them place those machines near us, or our walls will indeed be beaten in over our heads! They are so numerous they might shake a city!"

"Let us throw them into the river!" cried the impetuous Drogo, and immediately a sally was resolved on. The enemy could scarcely credit such hardihood; but in brief time they saw the young chief at the head of a troop of horse, contemptible in

number, rush from the fortress, break through their lines, and without pause or thought of the host that must close in their rear, charge with their lances and take the warlike machines. A body of the Prince of Capua's horse mounted and pursued the unexpected aggressors ; but before they could come up with them Drogo and his Normans had partially effected his object ; having thrown some of the battering-rams into the Garigliano, and dismounted others. They had now to defend themselves against the horse that were upon them, and the foot that were making a rapid approach. The scene that ensued, and that lasted but a few minutes, was more than animated. The small and compact troop of Normans, with steeds most admirably trained, and with their long lances, their bright steel-points glittering in the sun, were soon seen to throw the Italian cavalry into confusion, and to take their way back for the tower, at full career across the plain, where the patient oxen remained standing by their inverted burdens ; and the fierce buffaloes galloped hither and thither, brandishing their hideous horns, as if they too had part in the combat. Then came the Normans' shock with the Greek infantry, whose lengthened lines sought to intercept them in their retreat. But the bright spear-points were soon glancing on the tower-side of them. The Prince of Capua had made a better disposition of a body of Italian infantry ; they were formed into two solid squares, and the space between them and their flanks well protected by cavalry, Greek and Capuan. The Normans, however, galloped up, as if to pass between the squares, or to charge them ; but when within a lance's length they turned their horses' head, and in a glance of the eye crossed the left wing, and dashed through the horse that covered it. Drogo and his men were now within a few hundred yards of the tower ; but the principal force of the enemy remained still to be passed ; and their horses, some of them wounded, and all of them breathed, could scarcely make another charge with their full effect.

Meanwhile, the Greeks and Capuans pressed on their rear. The Normans could not pause ; they spurred their steeds, that no longer bounded like antelopes ; they raised their shout ; but it

was not so loud and confident as it had been, for they saw the denseness of the enemy's lines, and that tent-poles, provision-cars, and other objects at hand, had been hastily arranged to form a barricade, or to embarrass their horses' feet. But at this critical moment another Norman shout was heard; and as Drogo came in contact with the foe, he saw a sortie of his comrades, which could hardly have left half a dozen men in the tower, rushing, fresh and vigorous, to meet him. The confederates' lines, like a dyke suddenly lashed by two opposite torrents, gave way and opened, and the Normans met, but in gentler collision, and mingled, even as the waves of those torrents, the only loss they sustained being two horses of Drogo's troop, that fell exhausted among the lumber of the slight barricade.

The lovely Zoe, who with her father had witnessed the whole of these proceedings from the turrets of the fortress, and who, almost breathless, and with eyes strained until they well nigh cracked, had endeavoured to follow the rapid movements of Drogo, was the first to welcome the hero's return. Her intense excitement, the perils to which she had seen him exposed, a thousand passionate emotions, would not permit her to preserve her habitual demeanour; to see him there, safe and unhurt from such an affray,—there! gazing upon her with looks of love, was so much bliss, that she could not remember each moment might renew his danger, and that they were surrounded by implacable enemies. She fondly grasped the Norman's arm; she said nothing save—"Drogo! my gallant Drogo!" but there was that in the tone of her tremulous voice—in the expression of her eyes, her face, her form, (for all her animated person spoke)—to thrill a heart less passionate than our young warrior's.

The gallantry of the lover, however, could not be rewarded by any important results; he had only delayed the approach of the warlike engines of the enemy for a short time; for it was easy to the numbers of the Greeks and Capuans again to raise the overthrown battering-rams, and even to regain parts of their machinery that had been precipitated into the Garigliano. And not only was this done by the confederates, but in a few hours other forces had

arrived ; they had dug trenches, erected barricades, and, in spite of several other sallies of the Normans, prepared the ground for the reception of the weighty catapults. Before the sun went down, they had succeeded in placing nearly all their engines in their proper positions, though not without the expense of much blood.

On the following morning, before the vapours had curled from the plain and the river, the besiegers made demonstrations ; but, ere they began the attack, the herald again informed the Normans that even now, if they would deliver up the traitor Datto, their lives and the walls of his Holiness's tower should be saved.

The commander's answer was as bold as before, and the attack, as threatened, commenced.

The heavy battering engines, groaning and creaking most discordantly with their efforts, threw stones of tremendous size, and beat the tower with ponderous beams armed with iron, and rendered heavier by blocks of lead inserted in them. The ancient edifice was made to shake in every part, nor were the Normans long in preceiving that it was indeed more than probable they should all be buried under its toppling walls. The nature of this service was by no means such as the Normans excelled in ; they had no notion of engineering or mechanics ; their boiling valour required a lance, a steed, and an open field ; still, however, under the direction of Datto, they repaired the breaches, and strengthened, as best they could, the weaker parts of the fortress, and, animated by the generous and gallant spirit of their two chiefs, never murmured nor spoke of surrender.

Love, that can brave the earthquake and the shipwreck, the fire, the plague, and all the dreadful crises to which frail humanity is exposed, could even live on in scenes like these, and irradiate the dark and tottering walls of the tower of the Garigliano. The moments Drogo could spare from his post were passed with the beautiful Zoe ; and while he was with her, though the crash and the rumble of the battering engines and the falling edifice—though the savage shouts and curses, and threats of vengeance, were audible every instant, she could almost forget or despise the

fate that threatened her. It was something, too, for her passionate heart to feel, that if they perished, they perished together ; and that one tomb, the ruins of the prostrated tower, would hold their remains.

Minds of a vulgar temper are depressed and weakened by a succession of dangers and a continuation of misfortunes ; but generous spirits acquire, from the same causes, strength more than they themselves could have imagined. Zoe, so gentle, so retiring, apparently so timid at Monte Gargano, was a heroine at the Gargliano ; and it was exquisite for Drogo to observe how firm resolve, to do or to suffer, was expressed by those features moulded by beauty, and destined (it should have seemed) to reflect none but the sweetest and the happiest of feelings.

Night somewhat slackened, but did not entirely suspend the efforts of the determined besiegers. Their vigour was more than renewed at the following dawn ; and ere the morning was far advanced, two tremendous rents were made in the walls of the tower, by which a bolder enemy, provided with every implement necessary, as were the assailants, would at once have made an assault. Still, however, they preferred battering to close combat with the dreaded Normans. They did this work with effect—they might, in fact, have entertained the idea of burying them there ; for, about the hour of noon, an angle of the tower—an immense mass of the edifice,—reeled, and fell inward with terrific crash. The Greeks and Italians sent up a shout of triumph ; but when the dust, that rose from the ruins like a dense smoke, cleared away, they still saw, and apparently without any diminution of numbers, the dauntless Norman garrison collected on the battlements and discharging missiles. Drogo was there, and he had the good fortune to see a dart with a paper attached to it fall near the spot where he stood. It came from the enemy's camp, but looked not like an hostile missive. He took it up, and hastily unfolded the paper—it was written upon, but, alas ! his accomplishments did not extend to reading. What was to be done ?—the billet might contain something of importance. He thought of the chaplain whom the devout garrison were provided with, and summoned him to his presence



from the innermost and strongest part of the tower, where the monk, with a laudable care for his bodily safety, had disposed of himself. But again, and still alas ! this learned son of the Church could only read his own missal, which he knew by heart,—and in vain shook his head and stroked his beard over the paper that had come at the arrow's end. Happily at this moment Datto approached, and Drogo, remembering he was a clerk, put the paper into his hands.

As the eye of the unfortunate noble of Bari glanced over it, his cheek waxed ghastly pale, and his whole form trembled. The emotion of fear or of horror did not however last long—he seemed to summon up all his energies, and exclaiming, “ Well, be it so ! my hour is come ; but Drogo will save my child ! ” He took the warrior apart, and read to him the note thus :—

“ Efforts have been made in vain to induce the Prince of Capua to dissolve his alliance with the Greeks, or to make the Greek Catapan forego his implacable revenge. Perhaps endeavours have not been wanting to raise up a friendly force to relieve the tower of the Garigliano—but the confederates have come with an army too numerous. That tower must fall, but the lives of the brave need not be sacrificed. There are those who are solemnly pledged for the safety of the Norman garrison, and for the preservation of all they may possess, whenever they choose to surrender. It has been impossible to procure terms for the imprudent and unhappy Datto ; but his daughter may be preserved from captivity and dishonour as the wife of the gallant Drogo. Let their hands be joined forthwith.”

“ Of a certainty ! ” cried the young warrior, “ that warning comes from the Abbot of Monte Casino ! ”

“ From no other ! ” said Datto.

“ And how would you have it attended to ? ” inquired Drogo, who ill brooked the thoughts of a surrender, and the destruction of the father of his Zoe.

“ Obey it to the letter ! ” said the wretched noble, “ so alone may my daughter be preserved. Think not of me : I am prepared for

a fate I cannot shun. But obey it instantly ! Hark ! that crash ! It is impossible these walls can stand much longer !” And in fact, as he spoke, another immense mass of the tower fell in, and the whole trembled as if with an earthquake.

Still, however, Drogo hesitated, and said, “ But what *will* be your fate ?”

“ Death !” replied Datto, in a voice so hollow and awful that it seemed to proceed from the grave.

“ May not your enemies be moved to mercy ?” demanded Drogo encouragingly.

“ Death !—an inevitable and an ignominious death !” said Datto, as if he had not attended to Drogo’s last words,—“ is *my* fate. But will you not save my Zoe ? Are you indifferent to the orphan of a dishonoured and beggared man ?”

Drogo stepped aside, and conversed a few moments with the commandant of the tower, who was standing with admirable composure on a tottering parapet, while the walls of his fortress were falling around him. The young Norman then ordering the monk to follow, repaired with Datto to the apartment of his daughter.

The lovely Zoe was made acquainted with the necessity of an instant union ; but in mercy and in prudence the inevitable fate of her father was concealed from her—Datto himself speaking cheerfully of approaching friends, and the interference in his favour of the powerful Abbot of Monte Casino. The chaplain was much readier at a marriage than at reading strange hands, and that ceremony was speedily performed in a gloomy chamber, while the battering engines and the crushing walls—the shouts of the assailants and the curses of the assailed, formed a discordant accompaniment to the words of love and peace, and the sacred and enduring contract.

As Datto embraced his daughter ere he gave her over, and for ever, to the Norman, a few tears came into his eyes ; but he dashed them away when he saw the fondness with which Drogo clasped his pale and trembling bride to his heart. From this

strange and unpropitious wedding the bridegroom had forthwith to run to dispose of the last scenes of the perilous drama which the bold Normans had been performing at the tower of the Garigliano. Drogo and the commandant informed their men that it was time to think of a flag of truce. Some of those daring fellows said they thought with their captains; but others talked of a preference of being buried under the old walls to falling into the hands of the treacherous and cruel Greeks; and if Drogo had not assured them that the faith of the Catapan should be guaranteed by a better and holier personage, the greater part of them certainly would have opposed surrender.

No sooner was a white flag appended to a lance waved towards the hostile camp, than an officer advanced thence, and the Greeks and Italians ceased to attack the dismantled fortress.

"Are you ready to surrender the tower and your guest?" he demanded.

"On my faith!" cried the commandant, "ye have even made doors enough by which to come in, if ye were that way inclined; but we will still be at the gaps, or buried under what remains of these walls, unless both Greek and Capuan chief swear to let us Normans pass hence unharmed, with our weapons and our horses, and whatever else you have left us above ground."

"In spite of your obstinacy, they are well disposed, even now, to do as much as that," said the officer.

"To all which we require a pledge,—a sacred pledge," cried Drogo.

"That, too, shall ye have," said the officer, and he retired.

In a few minutes a retinue of superior officers, headed by a dignified ecclesiastic, whom Drogo recognised as the Abbot of Monte Casino, advanced to the middle of the space between the fortress and the besiegers' works; and after a trumpet had been sounded, a voice from amidst them invited the Normans to come forth. But Drogo alone issued from the tower. The young Norman approached the group with a free and almost supercilious air, and received the oaths of the Greek Catapan Bojano, of

Pandulph, the Prince of Capua, and Athenulph, the Abbot, to the conditions that the Normans should be permitted to go in peace whither they list, and to carry with them arms and whatever they might possess. He then returned to the tower, which was forthwith evacuated by the Normans.

Drogo, with Zoe leaning on his arm and followed by Datto, was the last of the warriors that left the ruined fortress. The Greeks at once seized upon father and daughter, as their fair prizes ; but the latter was reluctantly resigned when the gallant Norman claimed her as his wife. The trembling, weeping Zoe was enveloped in a long, dense veil, that concealed from the Catapan the surpassing loveliness of her face and form, which had he seen, he probably would not so easily have let her pass as Norman property. But Zoe herself would not have separated from her father, save by actual force, had she not been again humanely deceived. She was told he was to be conveyed as a prisoner to Constantinople, where he might hope for the pardon or the mercy of the Emperor ; nor did she learn his fate until years after. That fate was such as accorded with the spirit and "tender mercies" of the age. Datto was conducted from the Garigliano to the shores of the Adriatic on an ass, and there, at Bari, his native city, being sewn up in a leather sack, like those who were guilty of parricide,\* he was thrown into the sea.

The fortunes of his son-in-law were more brilliant. After the affair of the tower of Garigliano, he quitted the Pope's service and joined a numerous body of his countrymen who occupied a strong camp in the depths of the marches of Campania. Among these soldiers of fortune Drogo soon obtained pre-eminence ; and when the timid Duke of Naples engaged them in his service, and built a town for them as a bulwark for his shrunken states against Capua, our hero, with his fair wife, was entitled to a conspicuous resi-

\* It was customary to put in this sack a dog, a monkey, and a viper. This mode of punishment is frequently mentioned as being inflicted on political offenders.

dence in Aversa. In that fair city, where the independent banner of the Normans attracted every year fresh swarms of pilgrims and soldiers, a beautiful and flourishing family grew around Drogo and Zoe. They lived to see the Greeks expelled from Bari, and the Normans the masters of all Apulia ; but their children had part and interest in the all but miraculous fulfilment of the destinies of that wonderful people, when the bold and skilful Robert Guiscard occupied as a king nearly all those lovely regions which form the present kingdom of Naples, and was inaugurated by the Pope himself as " Duke of Apulia, Calabria, and hereafter of Sicily, by the grace of God and Saint Peter."



## The Brides of Venice.

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Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee,  
And was the safeguard of the West : the worth  
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,—  
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty !  
She was a maiden city, bright and free ;  
No guile seduced, no force could violate :  
And when she took unto herself a mate,  
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.  
And what if she hath seen those glories fade  
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ?  
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
When her long life hath reach'd its final day.  
Men are we, and must grieve when e'en the shade  
Of that which **once** was great is pass'd away.

WORDSWORTH.

**T**HAT equality among men which has been assumed in our days as characteristic of a free republic, has never been found to have existed in any republican government mentioned by ancient or by modern history. Even in the infancy of such institutions, and where an association has been formed by free men, avoiding a common enemy and relying on mutual support, it will always appear that a few individuals of superior intellect, or more brilliant courage, took the lead of the rest, and that by degrees the government of the little state, with the distinction that power and command give to their possessors, was vested in a class, or caste, which became more or less numerous according to circumstances. Theorists may assert the truism, and lament that the qualities and virtues of the father do not invariably descend to the son, who may thus be unworthy of the privileges enjoyed by his

parent; but the process which establishes hereditary right is natural and inevitable, and must always tend to the formation of an aristocracy, or a distinct and superior order. Nowhere, perhaps, was this general course of things more strongly marked than in the old republic of Venice, which, governed at its foundation by twelve annual tribunes, submitted in 697 to the authority of a Duke, or Doge, whose power was soon limited by oligarchical councils, which gradually monopolized the power of the state. As early as the middle of the tenth century, the date of our tale, Venice, that prided herself in the title of "the eldest daughter—the only legitimate daughter—of the Roman Republic," had admitted the difference of grades, of high birth and plebeian extraction; and the lower orders were accustomed to look up, with respect and for protection, to the noble and wealthy class.

Vettor Urseolo, a Venetian in the decline of life, was among the proudest names of the latter order; but such were his liberality, his humanity, and other virtues, that there was not a soul on the closely-clustering islets that regarded him with jealousy or envy. With the poor he was especially popular, and his house (even the nobles of Venice could not yet boast of marble palaces) was the resort of all who had a prayer or petition to present to the state, or a gift to supplicate from individual generosity.

One morning, at an early hour, and at an early season of the year, as the venerable magistrate was seated in an apartment that overlooked the broad expanse of the Adriatic Sea, roughly agitated by a wintry gale, but whose broken and obstructed waves rippled gently through the narrow canal on which his house was situated, an attendant entered to announce visitors.

"Who comes thus betimes, Andrea? Are they messengers from the Council, or from the Doge, or——" inquired Orseolo.

"No, Signor; it is only Master Sandi, and his wife, Beatrice, and his son Marco, and gossip Margherita, and her husband Giacomo, and pretty daughter Teresa—all come, I suppose, to thank your Excellency, for as much as you were pleased to interest yourself in the affair of the marriage, and the marriage portion for Teresa."

"It will be even as you say," rejoined the good-natured noble. "Keep them not waiting—give them instant admittance; for, except the betrothed, they are aged like myself, and must feel this cold weather."

Andrea retired, and presently returned ushering in the humble party, who advanced respectfully towards the master of the house, and bowing low before him, one by one kissed his hand, and briefly but energetically expressed their gratitude. Teresa, the youthful and timid bride, was the last to pay this devoir; as she pressed her rich, soft lips to Urseolo's shrivelled hand, and murmured her sincere but almost inaudible thanks, the old noble protested that he was but too happy his recommendation to the Republic in favour of so handsome and virtuous a couple had been attended with success, and that, with the favour of St. Mark, he himself would attend at the wedding and drink a wine cup to their happiness, and that of their young companions the other brides and bridegrooms of Venice. After a short visit, the grateful group withdrew, Urseolo having ordered Andrea to give them refreshments ere they left the house.

It was a custom already ancient in Venice, and one that marked the primitiveness of society, that all the marriages of the nobles and principal citizens should be celebrated on the same day and in the same church. Candlemass-eve was the happy day fixed upon for the celebration of the nuptials, which was in fact a public and general festival, for on every year the Republic, from its treasury, gave marriage portions to twelve of the daughters of the people, or poorer citizens, who joined the hymeneal retinue, and were espoused with the fairest and noblest of Venice. Where many young girls were poor, a selection was of course necessary; and it was indeed to thank Vettor Urseolo for having preferred and recommended Teresa, and that successfully, that the members of the two families had made the visit we have just mentioned.

A few days after, and at the placid hour of "Ave Maria," as the noble Venetian was returning from church, where he had offered up his evening devotions with fervency of heart and hope, his somewhat deafened ear was struck with the sweet sound of choral



voices—of female voices, youthful, silvery, and soft, as might be an anthem of angels heard from a distant sky.

“Stop ! list ye ! What sweet sounds are those ?” said Urseolo to Andrea, on whose arm he leaned.

“It is the hymn to the Virgin, sung by the twelve poor brides of Venice, who have met, as is the wont, in the porch of yon monastery,” replied Andrea, whose recollection and ears were quicker than his master’s.

“The twelve poor brides,” said the noble ; “ay ! right ; to-morrow is the nuptial day. ’Tis an old custom and praiseworthy ; let us hasten and hear the maidens.”

Supported by Andrea, the warm-hearted old man took hasty steps until he gained the walls of the monastery, beneath which he paused to listen to the strains from within. But as he gained the holy retreat, those strains died away in a low murmur. Soon, however, the choral voices again rose on the solemn stillness of the evening air, and he distinctly heard words like the following :—

Salve Regina ! ever bright !  
 Let peace be ours and rest to-night !  
 And grant us, Virgin, on the morrow  
 A long day’s joy without a sorrow,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! guide each prone,  
 And still be with us on the shore,  
 And at the altar and the shrine  
 Where beams that meek-eyed face of thine,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! Jesus’ mother !  
 Give bliss to those who love each other ;  
 And oh ! support each blushing bride  
 When trembling by her lover’s side,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! so each wreath  
 That binds our brow shall lie beneath  
 Thy pictured effigy, and last  
 In perfume when their bloom is past,  
Ave Maria

Salve Regina ! for the rose  
 On Brenta’s sunniest banks that glows,  
 The myrtle sweet, the lily fair,  
 We twine around our bridal hair,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! like those flowers  
May some enduring charm be ours,  
That when our youth and bloom are fled  
Our husbands' love may not be dead,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! still be near,  
And aid us in that hour of fear,  
When maidens into matrons grown,  
We heave the first maternal moan,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! so our shoots  
Shall gather round thee like the roots  
Of rose and lily, and shall bloom  
For thee—when we are in the tomb,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! wife and mother,  
Goddess—yet woman—like none other !  
Thou still rememberest in Heaven  
The wants—the heart—to woman given,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! then to thee  
We raise the hand and bend the knee,  
And feel that thou wilt aid us still  
In joy, or sorrow, good or ill,  
Ave Maria !

Salve Regina ! ever bright !  
Let peace be ours and rest to-night !  
And grant us, Virgin, on the morrow,  
A long day's joy without a sorrow,  
Ave Maria !

As the last notes of this simple chorus died away, but not before, the aged patrician turned towards home, talking as he went, with his serving-man, and wishing the "happy evening" to everybody he met. Before his deliberate steps had reached the door of his mansion, the troop of youthful brides, with buoyant hearts and loquacious tongues, passed him on their return from their devotions ; and while each respectfully saluted the good old man, the gentle Teresa kissed his hand, and showed her gratitude by a tear she let fall upon it,—one little tear of which she was herself all unconscious.

"May the Virgin have you, my child, in her holy keeping !" said Urseolo, patting Teresa's cheek ; "and may the saints preserve you all, fair brides !"

The maidens, resuming their conversation, which very naturally mainly turned on the preparations and ceremonials of the morrow, went on their way, and old Urseolo presently crossed his own hospitable threshold. The frigidity of age was warmed by his habitual benevolence ; and on the present occasion, the confiding spirits, the pure happiness of the simple maidens—the happiness to which he had contributed—transfused themselves into his own bosom, and he felt for a time as youth can feel, despite his four-score years.

“Andrea,” said he, cheerfully, “this eve of marriage, and the hymn of these maidens, hath given me great delight. All is as it should be : the Madonna will feel their anticipating gratitude and their fond reliance on her, and hear their prayers ; and remember, Andrea, to-morrow morning that my purse be fuller than usual. I will add something to the generous donation of the State.”

As the favourite serving-man laid his frugal supper, which was also a solitary one,—as the aged Urseolo had survived a numerous family,—he fell into a fit of musing, which occasionally vented itself in words ; “It is sixty years, wanting one—ay, fifty-nine years to night—since I was an anxious bridegroom, expectant of the morrow, which it seemed to me would never come. I was then as many a gay youth is this fair eve of Candlemass ; and will they too, in their turns be as I am now ? Ay, ay ! strength, and beauty, and ardent passion endure but for awhile ; but we may dissipate our bootless regret for their loss by generous deed and religious thought, which are not subject to the mutability of time. And yet it seems strange that this shrivelled, bony, trembling hand should be the same member as that youthful one with which I led my blushing bride to the altar—that these feeble arms are the same that rowed my young wife’s bark from the Lido to the mouth of the Brenta ! How bright then, how smooth seemed the path of life !—everything seemed so easy of execution. I have lived to find that path a path of thorns—to sigh over the utter impracticability of many an ardent project—the extinction of many a heart-cherished hope ; but nothing showed me then, through the dusky avenue of years, a weak and lonely old man tottering towards that grave into which he

has seen the wife of his bosom, his brave sons, and his fair daughters, descend before him. Surely I could not then have recognised the image of what I now am—and this, too, is strange ! Well, well, if I have suffered, I have also enjoyed : 'tis the lot of humanity ; and if I have suffered more than my fellows, the more attentive ought I to be to the sufferings of those who are within the reach of my bounty. True, I am left alone of mine !—but no : I cannot be all alone and childless so long as the State of Venice has children fair and virtuous like those I have just seen !” Here the warm glow of benevolent feeling dispelled the melancholy expression which had gathered on the old patrician’s countenance, and his thoughts again flowed in their usual mild, unruffled channel.

Urseolo awoke the following morning, and arose even earlier than his usually early hour. As he was performing those devotions with which he invariably began his peaceful day, the grey, uncertain dawn brightened into rapid light, and the rising sun flashed his rays of crimson and amber across the waves of the Adriatic.

It was a glorious day, this said day of Candlemass ! The seasons themselves seemed to do homage to the nuptial morning ; for early as it was in the year, it was mild and balmy as though warmed by the breath of genial summer ; and the deep blue sky overhead, and the sea that begirt Venice and her hundred isles—its expanse near at hand coloured with an emerald green, but in the distance blue as the sky, and only a few shades darker—retained no traces of the recent and angry winter.

Vettor Urseolo, joined by a number of friends, repaired to the spot where the brides of Venice assembled, and where the whole population of the city was rapidly gathering, either to take part in, or to witness, the grand annual festival. The bridegrooms, with their brides, their relations, and friends, all attired in their best, with humours gay, and rose-hued as their festive dresses, stood on the shore, along which a vast number of gondolas was moored ; those appointed for the marriage parties being splendidly decorated with Eastern tapestry, and carpets, and curtains, and banners, and streamers of glossy silk,—objects of luxury with which already

active commerce (principally with the Greek empire) furnished the rising Republic.

Where love and pleasure were the sole motives, there were likely to be few loiterers. All the parties had assembled, and they only waited for the Doge of Venice, who, by established custom, always headed the matrimonial procession. Nor did the good and valiant Pietro Candiano (the third of his name who wore the ducal robe) cause them to wait long. He arrived at the shore with a brilliant retinue of patricians and priests; and having saluted by gesture, for words could scarcely be heard over the universal buzz and tattle of all the men and women of Venice, embarked in his magnificent gondola, which was instantly propelled by numerous oars towards the isle of Olivolo, the residence of the bishop, and the spot consecrated to the general annual marriages of the state. The nobles or distinguished citizens followed the Doge; the twelve poor young brides, with our acquaintance Teresa among them, distinguished by her graceful modesty and beauty, were rowed in the wake of the nobler barks, and the nuptial and aquatic procession went gaily on by the shore called "of the Sclavonians," and through the narrow sea-passages which open on Olivolo, pursued by a shoal of boats, in which the Venetian people hurried, and pressed, and talked, and halloed to each other, with all the vivacity of their character.

When the joyous troops, in brief space of time, approached the sacred isle, bands of music from the shore and from the larger gondolas made the bright sunny air resound; and to these strains, and the far-away-repeated and re-echoing "*vivas*" of the people, the bridegrooms, with their brides, landed at Olivolo in the order in which they had come.

At that moment, from the marine character of the scenery—the low islets, that seemed to float on the bosom of the waters, and that were all besprent with sea-weeds, shells, and other productions of the deep—and from the lulled, complacent, aspect of the Adriatic, it might have appeared to a fanciful eye that the divinities of ocean had risen from their coral palaces to celebrate some high festival; and surely never was Naiad or Nereid, or the fairest

daughter in the train of Amphitrite, fairer than Isla or Chiara, with many others of the merely mortal brides of Venice !

When all the happy couples, with their immediate retinues of relatives and friends, had disembarked, they formed into order, and advanced processionally towards the church of Olivolo ; the music still playing, and attendants carrying the brides' marriage presents, the jewels, the ornaments of gold, and rich stuffs, all exposed, and adding to the splendour of the gay march. As the foremost step trod on the precincts of the church, or the "*terra santa*" that surrounded the sacred edifice, the profane music ceased at once, and the solemn chant of the clergy was heard in its stead. A double line of monks, in costumes picturesque and wild, (for the cenobites of Italy still retained much of their savage prototypes of Egypt,) stood ranged on each side of the door of the church, and through this devout avenue, the breathing figures of which were as stark, and mute, and motionless as the granite statues before an ancient Egyptian temple, the procession passed into the church, where the bishop with his clergy awaited their arrival.

The "Messa Cantata," or the grand chanted mass, was begun, the temple was filled with harmony from a hundred voices, and incense from a hundred vases, swinging on their chains of silver, when of a sudden a shriek of horror and alarm—a wild, shrill, long, continuous shriek, which seemed as if it issued at once from every one of the thousands of women and children who were crowding without the church—burst on the astonished ears. The service was interrupted—people looked at each other with haggard and wondering eyes—a cry of affright from the fair brides (but now so happy !) and their female friends responded to the shriek without : the priests retreated from their posts, and the bridegrooms rushed to see what should thus disturb the harmony of their nuptials.

The cause was soon evident : the church was beset by armed men, and the cries of "The Istriots ! The Pirates ! the Pirates !" carried dismay to all hearts. The next moment the church itself was profaned by these desperate marauders, from whom the Venetians had already suffered so much, that the very name of "Istriot"

awoke terror ; and a tremendous but most unequal struggle was commenced between the bridegrooms with their friends, and the pirates. The ungentle implements of warfare were ill placed in a ceremony of peace and love ; and to prevent any serious consequences resulting from the little brawls in which the warm-blooded and excited Venetians might engage, it had always been arranged that at the eve of Candlemass and the festival at Olivolo all persons should go unarmed : consequently there was neither sword nor daggar to oppose to the weapons of the Istriots, and the Venetians, defenceless, and many of them wounded, were driven into a corner of the church, where they sought to form a rampart with their bodies round the shrieking brides.

At this conjuncture, old Vettor Urseolo, who at the moment of the unexpected interruption was standing by the side of the high altar, and whose venerable age and still commanding person and expression were calculated to produce an impression even on the minds of barbarous men, stepped forward and addressed the foremost of the assailants.

“ Friends ! you find us all without our weapons, and you well knew you should so find us, or were you not here—here before us, the Venetians, who have so often chastised you : but as it is, we are in your power—your treacherously surprised captives :—take then



those glittering baubles, those jewels and that gold, which have lured you hither,—take them all, I say, and hence with ye !

Venice will not feel the loss ; her industry will always keep *her* richer than robbery your den ! The state shall make up the loss to its fair daughters ; take then the marriage gifts—take them, I say again !” and the old patrician pointed to the open coffers that contained the various and tempting treasures, all of which had been brought into the church, that the benediction of the clergy might be pronounced over them.

The booty was ample ; and many of the Istriots gloated over, the caskets and their sparkling contents ; but one who seemed their chief, and who stood in front of Vettor Urseolo, shook his head at the proposition of the brave old man, and said, “’Tis not enough ! ’tis not enough ! We count on a richer prize than these baubles !”

“Insatiable that ye are ! the jewels and the gold might well pay ye for a sail across the Adriatic ; but ye would have a ransom, and in good sooth we are your prisoners ! Well, be it so ! let us speak as to this ransom ?” replied Urseolo, who felt how completely they were in the power of the marauders, and was fain to prevent acts of violence which would fall on the fairest and noblest of Venice.

“The prize we seek is even richer than a ransom for all and each of ye here assembled,” said the Pirate chief, stroking his long, shaggy beard, and grinning a grin most horribly self-complacent.

“What wouldst have, then, to satisfy thy rapacity ?” said Urseolo : “wouldst take the city of St. Mark itself ? No ! by the blessed Evangelist, whose bones repose in our temple, and whose celestial wings are spread over Venice to defend and bless, that shall not be ! Here *we* came with holiday hearts and attirements, leaving our armour hanging on our walls ; but only cross yon laguna and you will find the battle-axe, the spear, and the sword, and hands that know how to wield what they hold ! All the Venetians are not here, mark thou that !”

“We want none of your muddy isles, or your walls or houses,” said the barbarian, with a sneer ; “the prize we seek is worthier still—richer than Venice, even with the bones of St. Mark included !”



"What, then, is't ye want?" demanded the Patrician. "The brides of Venice," exclaimed the Pirate, with a voice of thunder.

"The brides of Venice!" roared out the whole troop of the Istriots; and then the full extent of their calamity and the Roman-rape nature of the pirates' object was revealed to the Venetians; for, repeating the cry of "The brides of Venice!" the armed men rushed to seize the lovely and now despairing maidens.

A dreadful scene ensued. The ministers of God were smitten with the sword, the altar was defiled with blood, and in the confusion the most holy "bread and wine," the more than symbols of the Divinity, to Catholic apprehension, were spilt and trodden under impious feet. But the final struggle was of necessity short: the senseless or frantic maidens were torn from the embrace of their bleeding and defenceless lovers by the pirates, who bore them in their sturdy arms towards their boats, which were concealed behind the islet of Olivolo. The curse of rage and revenge; the moan of hopeless love, of utter despair; the thrilling cry of maternal anguish; the low murmur of breaking hearts, filled that gay sunny air, the atmosphere which only peace and joy and the dearest affections of humanity should ever have breathed. And when the ravishers, followed closely by the Venetian sufferers, reached the shore, and their barks received the young victims, it was pitiful to behold and hear what passed. With hands outstretched towards the sea, unmindful of the blows and the waving swords of the ruthless Istriots, here a father called on his child, his only child; here a fond mother, as she saw her daughter disappear, fell senseless to the earth; here another doting parent rent the air with her screams; and there, away in the pirates' bark, a lovely maiden shrieked the name of her lover, her husband, who, as he heard her, beat his forehead with his clenched fist, and ground his teeth in agony and madness: nor were there lacking cases where the young bridegroom, despoiled of his soul's treasure, and mortally wounded by the sword of his foe, fell and expired on the shore. Meanwhile, the Istriots prepared their boats, and in a few seconds they rowed lustily away.

The Venetians were stupefied or lost in the impotence of de-

spair, when the energetic old man Vettor Urseolo, and the Doge Candiano, younger in years, but not bolder in heart than his friend, advanced and addressed them. The Patricians spoke to different parties, but their discourse was the same.

“Brave men of Venice !” said they, “do not abandon yourselves to womanly grief and despondence ! The calamity may yet be averted by your wonted bravery. What the sword of the robber has won, (oh ! had ye each had but a staff in hand !) the sword of the lover, father, brother, may yet regain. We have fitting barks and arms in Venice : let us then hasten to them, and pursue the accursed Istriots, to whom be death !”

“Death and utter extermination to the foul thieves !” cried the bolder voices, whilst the rest by degrees recovered their self-possession ; and in a few minutes all the Venetians, not even excepting the old and the infirm, flew on the wings of the oars of their festive gondolas to the arsenal of the city, where their stronger vessels and war-galleys were moored. Whilst they prepare them, let us devote a few words of our narrative to their enemies the Istriots.

The eastern side of the Adriatic Sea, or the coast of Dalmatia, which faces the Italian shores, is much less fair and fertile than they. An almost uninterrupted line of harsh and lofty rock, with, at long distances an inlet, within whose iron-bound sides the mariner dares not attempt to penetrate except in calm weather, a ridge of bare and towering mountains beyond these rocks are its most marking features ; but its creeks, when once entered, are secure, and easily defended from the attack of an enemy ; and a succession of groups of islands and islets, among which only the long accustomed can navigate with safety, are spread along that coast, and mark it out naturally as an advantageous position for such as would rob on the sea and keep their booty secure on land. The Narentini, who had settled and multiplied at the head of the deep gulf of Narenta, nearly opposite to Ancona, were the most numerous and audacious ; but there many other piratical tribes of Dalmatians and Istrians, who, as well as they, in their small but strong and admirably constructed barks, managed with a dexterity

equally admirable, could scour the Adriatic Sea with the whole Italian line of coast, and the islands of Corfu, Zante, Cephalonia, with their neighbours, and the shores of continental Greece. The ships and the trade of the busy Venetian Republic had often suffered from their depredations, which were allowed a wider range, and almost an impunity, when, in the middle of the ninth century, the state was distracted by factions, and the Venetians, wholly occupied by their internal warfare, neglected the exterior defences, and the means which had hitherto kept piracy somewhat in check. The Istriots, who very successfully prosecuted the general calling, the pirates we have seen carrying off the brides of Venice, had long been acquainted with the festival of Olivolo, and that all went there unarmed. They had repaired thither in the darkness of the preceding night, and concealed their numerous boats behind that island, which was then desert, and only inhabited by a few priests; they had lain undiscovered, and seized their fittest moment for the execution of the project they had long cherished. And now return we to their pursuers.

Under the vigilant and skilful eye of the Doge of Venice, the embarkations were soon got ready for sea, and a gallant fleet of galleys and strong *scampa-vias* darted from the narrow canals into the open sea. The best of the population of the Republic, with their brave Doge at their head, were there; nor was it without difficulty that Vetter Urseolo was prevailed upon by his friends not to expose his hoary, venerable head to the perils of the chase and fight. There was not a breath of wind—the wide expanse of the Adriatic was as smooth as glass—the barks of the pirates, where were the young brides, the daughters, sisters, of the Venetians, were full in sight before them; and when deprived lovers, fathers, and brothers, worked the oars, it may be conceived that the vessels glided swiftly over the sea, then in a state so calm and favourable to rowing. It was a stirring sight to watch their progress at this moment: unlike their peaceful attire, but so short a time ago, at the Church of Olivolo, every Venetian had on his most warlike harness; and as the arms and armour glanced back the rays of the sun, and the crowded boats cut through the waves,

leaving a long line of foam behind them, they looked like a group of irate dragons showing their teeth and their glaring eyes to the objects they had devoted to destruction. The *scampa-vias* and lighter barks gained on the war-galleys perceptibly, and a little also on the pirates; and so fearless and ardent were they in the pursuit, that they would scarcely attend to the orders of the Doge, who prudently would prevent their collision with the strong barks of the Istriots without the support of his heavier vessels. When, however, they moderated their course to that of the Doge's galley, it was soon seen that the pirates gained upon them. Oh! how did the Venetians then pray for a little wind, a breeze that might fill the wide sails of their ships, and bring them on the retreating foe, which it was evident their oars could never do. Ever and anon impatient eyes were cast upwards at the sun; hands were raised to try whether they could feel a gentle coming flow of air; but still the flag of the Republic, at the Doge's stern, clung closely to the flag-staff, and the breeze came not. Meanwhile, the Istriot barks waxed less and less to the eye, and seemed about to dip beyond the line of the horizon, and to be no longer seen. This was not to be supported: with a loud shout, the *scampa-vias*, regardless of command or signal, again shot forward with all their might, leaving the war-galleys far behind.

"If these brave men reach the pirates without us, they are lost!" said the Doge Candiano, as he walked the deck of his galley with agitated steps: "the Istriot barks are too high and strong for them to cope with; but, by Heaven's grace, the breeze will blow ere noon—may it be fresh! and we shall be by their side."

But the Doge's assurance or hope could not quiet apprehension, when, as the time went on, the light Venetian vessels gained a point where they were nearer to the pirates than to their countrymen who were so unwillingly slower in the chase. "O for a sailful of wind! A breeze—a breeze!" was heard every moment on board the galleys, in which many men would have bought it at the expense of all they possessed in the world. And that breeze blew at last!

About an hour before the sun gained the meridian, a slight

ripple, at first far away, but gradually advancing, was seen from the galley decks ; next was heard a low, scarcely audible murmur among the rigging and furled sails ; then the Doge's flag fluttered on its staff, distended and raised its silken folds a little—then a little more, showing part of its noble impress, and presently it flaunted the air, proudly displaying the Lion of Saint Mark, and the imposing legend where the name of the Republic was linked with that of the disciple of our blessed Lord.

That very instant the grateful and ardent Venetians unfurled every sail, set every yard of canvas they had on board the galleys, until the hulks of those vessels bore the same proportion in size to their sails that the body of a sea-fowl does to its out-spread wings. Indeed, the Doge's hope was realized to its full extent, for the breeze that blew was a fresh one. The galleys careered over the furrowed waves that cast their cooling spray on the fatigued and heated men, now released from their oars, and standing in the prow of their ships watching their gallant march with that satisfaction which only seamen can enjoy in its full extent.

“Fair wind ! waft us on but thus awhile, and the brides of Venice shall be again her own, and the blood of the pirates shall dye the face of the Adriatic they have so long insulted with their depredations and murders,” joyfully exclaimed the Doge Candiano, whilst the hearts of all with him glowed with the same hope and vengeance.

The Venetian galleys soon reached the *scampa-vias*, and a loud and long-continued shout from each of the divisions of the fleet hailed their junction. But the lighter vessels, notwithstanding that they too had spread sails, could not keep pace with the galleys, and were in their turn left behind, though with oar added to canvas they contrived that the distance should never be great.

But the blessed dew of Heaven falls alike on the good and the bad man's grounds ; and Heaven's breeze now blew as freshly in the sails of the villainous despoilers as in those of the despoiled. Still, however, it soon appeared that the Venetian galleys neared the Istriot barks—neared them indeed by degrees, so much that their details could be made out, the voices of the pirates heard,

and female forms descried by fond parents and passionate bridegrooms.

At this critical moment, when every bosom bounded, the wind waxed fainter and fainter, died away with a flutter in the flapping sails, and left the war-galleys like logs upon the waves. At the same time the Istriots took in their useless canvas, again applied their vigorous and expert arms to the oars, and shot a-head with a savage cry of insult and triumph. The Venetians ground their teeth and shook their clenched fists in spite. Some threw themselves on their knees on the deck, and with upraised hands, most fervently prayed for a renewal of the wind, blew it even a perilous gale; others spoke of the impracticability of recovering their lost treasures, should the pirates once gain their islands and strongholds in the gulf of Narenta; and every stroke of the oar was bringing them nearer to the Dalmatian coast, where, besides their safe retreats, there were friends and allies of the Istriots, and deadly foes of the Venetian people.

Again did the *scampa-vias* prepare to leave the galleys behind, and dare alone the pursuit and combat of an enemy of such superior force. The heart of the Doge, who gave the command himself that they should not part company, but whose voice was not heeded by the impetuous and half-frantic men in the boats, was now divided between the fears of missing the enemy, and that of losing, in an unequal contest, many of the bravest sons of Venice, instead of recovering her fairest daughters.

Still the dead, motionless calm continued; and the heavy galleys, which had lain on the waters still and stark, as though spell-bound to the spot, until their long sweeps of oars were manned, toiled after the lighter vessels and the pirates' barks, that every minute lessened to the sight. But, as all hearts were sinking in despondency, an old mariner on board the galleys pointed joyfully to a distant small fleecy white cloud that was traversing the deep clear blue of the sky. At first it was very minute, and its motion slow; but as it advanced, motion and size increased, and the waves of the sea, as if attracted, rolled on with it in long and rapid furrows. The Venetians once more shouted with joy,

the wide sails were again spread, and in a few seconds their galleys were again propelled forward by a breeze fresher, and by several points more favourable, than the preceding one. The lighter vessels were soon rejoined, and they moved on together, the galleys towing many of the *scampa-vias*. They gained on the pirates; the breeze still freshened; the masts groaned and creaked under their heavy press of sail; the sea foam burst on the decks of the galleys, and drenched all in the boats, that were with difficulty baled free of water; but they did not for this relax their speed, or take in a single yard of canvas. Away they went over the blue Adriatic, every ship with its spotless sails, swift and snowy white as an avalanche.

It was two hours after noon when they came up with the Istriots and began the sanguinary fight. The Doge's galley led the attack, grasping the largest of the enemy's barks, and throwing into it from her lofty deck a gallant and well-armed band. Though quadrupled in number by the boarders, the pirates made a desperate resistance; nor was it until nearly every man among them had fallen dead or sorely wounded in trunk and limb, that the Venetians were masters of the boat, and recovered the fair portion of its freight, who had added to the horror and confusion of the fight by their shrieks and vain attempts to avoid the scene of blood and gain the galley's deck. The other ships imitated the example of their leader; and the *scampa-vias* extending themselves in a wide circle, they together hemmed in the pirates in such a manner that not one boat of theirs could escape.

Love and revenge, the strongest passions of our nature, animated the Venetian youths, who rushed furiously to the attack; but the habitual hardihood of the Istriots did not forsake them for a moment, nor was a word of surrender ever heard until the mass of a crew had been hurled into the sea, or cast bleeding and helpless in the bottom of the boat. After a dreadful struggle, the pirates, who had paralleled the audacious theft of the Romans, but who did not, as is remarked by one of the chroniclers of this event,\* find in the Venetian maids the sympathy the Romans had

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\* Lettere su Venezia.

found in the fair Sabines, were completely overpowered, or, more accurately speaking, destroyed ; for few were the lives spared and the prisoners carried away by the enraged Venetians.

The clash of swords, the curses of assailers and assailed, now ceased, and the re-echoing and universal shout of "Viva San Marco !" drowned the groans of the dying. The brides of Venice were all recovered ; and scenes of rapture and melting affection, and love that wept over the fulness of its joy, succeeded the racking anguish and the bloody turmoil of the morning. These scenes were the more striking from the condition of the parties—the men being stained with blood, and the maidens also, whilst their hair was all dishevelled and their garments torn ; nor, in many instances, had the blood on the bridal robes gushed from the veins of the combatant, many of the fair daughters of Venice having been wounded in the confusion of the affray. But now, clasped in the passionate embrace of their spouses and friends, they were insensible to the hurts they had received.

We shall not attempt to paint the universal transport of joy that filled the heart of Venice, when the fleet that had so well done its duty arrived towards sunset at the island city, restoring all she had lost, and adding another deed to the scroll of her warlike honours. It was at once determined that the marriage ceremonies, which had been so rudely interrupted, should be renewed forthwith—that the custom should not be broken, nor the eve of Candlemas pass without witnessing the completion of the happiness of many a youthful couple. Consequently the brides of Venice were reconducted in triumph to the island and church of Olivolo ; and after a hymn of gratitude and thanksgiving to Heaven, that had speeded their friends in the chase and the fight, they were solemnly united to their lovers and deliverers.

The memory of this event was solemnized at Venice for centuries, by an annual procession of young girls, and a visit paid by the Doge on Candlemas eve to the parish church of Santa Maria Formosa. To the pirates of the Adriatic the audacious attempt of the Istriot band was of most fatal consequences. It called down the vengeance and awoke all the energies of the



Republic: the Doge Candiano, in repeated and formidable expeditions, carried destruction among their islands and retreats; and at his death transmitted to his successors the pursuit of his cherished enterprize, to purge that sea for ever of the corsairs that infested it—a benefit to humanity and civilization, which, in progress of time, was completed by the descendants of those who fought for the Brides of Venice.\*

\* Chronic. Danduli. Marin Sanuto Storia de' Duchi di Venezia. Sismondi, &c.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries.

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THE NORMANS IN ITALY TO THE  
LEAGUE OF THE LOMBARD CITIES AND THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE.

1057.—THE rise and extension of the Norman power in Italy, than which there is nothing more romantic in history, was, as we have seen, most rapid, and in this year Robert Guiscard, one of twelve heroic brothers, by adding Calabria to his conquests, put an end to the long dominion of the Eastern emperors in Italy, and acquired the sovereignty of the greater part of those beautiful countries that are now included within the kingdom of Naples.

1061.—The same ambitious prince carried his arms from Italy to Greece, with the grand design of overthrowing the Empire of the East, and of finally reducing even Constantinople to the Norman lance. Meanwhile his younger brother Roger conquered Sicily with a handful of Norman volunteers.

1127.—The son of Roger, upon the extinction of Robert Guiscard's posterity, united the two Norman sovereignties on the different sides of the Faro of Messina, and, subjugating the little republics of Amalfi and Naples and the principality of Capua, fixed a boundary of a state in the South of Italy which has hardly undergone a change since then.

The Church of Rome had at first viewed the conquests of the Normans with great alarm. Leo IX. had even taken the field against them ; but he was beaten and made prisoner, and purchased his liberation from the adventurous warriors, who implored pardon all the while, and worshipped him as the descendant of Saint Peter, by investing them with the regions their swords had already won. In their contentions with the Emperors Henry IV. and Henry V. the Popes availed themselves of the services of the Norman warriors, and rewarded their fidelity by repeating and enlarging their investiture.

1139.—Pope Innocent II. finally conferred upon Roger the title of King of Sicily. The justice of this donation, if it can so be called, on the part of the Popes, may be matter of discussion ; but the Normans, who had no title save their swords, were certainly right, according to the spirit of the times, to legitimate their conquests by Papal investiture. From this period down to our own days, the kingdom of Naples, even when in possession of the most powerful

princes of Europe, never ceased to pay a feudal acknowledgment, in the shape of a "*chinea bianca*," (white palfrey,) and an annual sum of gold to the chair of Saint Peter.

1154.—The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, ambitious, clever, and courageous, determining to assert his imperial rights, of which he entertained the most extravagant notions, (which the law professors of the time, and even those of Bologna, however, admitted,) armed Germany against Italian liberty. He was invited into Lombardy by citizens of Lodi who wept the tyranny of Milan. The warfare that ensued was tremendous; the Germans devastating and burning wherever they came, and the Lombard cities attacked defending themselves with heroism.

1158.—The Diet of Roncaglia, so humiliating to the Lombards, was held, and Barbarossa's pretensions acknowledged.

1162.—On the 25th March, the Emperor, who had laid siege to Milan a second time, and taken it, published at the head of his army his long-suspended sentence: the city was to be razed to its foundations, and the Milanese name effaced from among the names of people. This cruel sentence was obeyed as far as concerned the walls and edifices, but the tyrant could not so absolutely dispose of spirit or of name. Those of the Milanese soon revived.

1167.—The league of the free cities of Lombardy against Frederick Barbarossa was formed, and a new and sanguinary contest began.

1176.—The struggle so long and gallantly protracted was decided in favour of the Italians and liberty by the battle of Legnano.

1183.—The Peace of Constance assured to the free cities of Lombardy, on the part of the Emperor, all the regalian rights which he himself had possessed within their walls. He even assured to these free cities, in their dependent districts, all such of his rights as they had acquired by usage or prescription; he acknowledged their right of levying armies, of fortifying their walls, and of exercising within them a jurisdiction criminal as well as civil.



## The Carroccio ;

OR,

### THE BATTLE OF LEGNANO.

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Anzi girar la libertà mirai,  
E bacciar lieta ogni ruina, e dire,  
Ruine sì, ma servitù non mai !

G. B. PASTORINI.

Libertà vo cercando ch'è sì cara !

DANTE.

IT was on the evening of a beautiful spring day, of the spring of that year which was favourable to liberty and glorious to Italy—we mean the year one thousand one hundred and seventy-six, which saw the triumph of the Lombard citizens over the chivalry of Germany—that two young men embarked in a boat at the ancient town of Como, and took their way across the lake. It was a sweet and tranquil time : the deep waters were as smooth as if no wind had ever ruffled them ; and to look at the high mountains which closely bound them in, one might indeed have thought them for ever exempted from the visitation of storm or gust. The shores of that lake were not so peopled and cultivated as they have been in more recent periods ; yet, even then, many a villa eyed its white modest face in the mirror of the waters ; and many a cottage, half concealed among trellised vines, stood on the hills' sides. A dark grey fortress, once the apex of that abrupt conical mount at the end of the lake, where the stark ruins of a

castle of later date now claim the eye of the traveller, seemed to gaze with a martial frown over the vale, the lake, and its shores; but the city of Como, the picturesque birthplace of Pliny, at the foot of that mount, though surrounded by towers and battlements, reposed mildly in the lengthening shadows of evening, as if it were the very abode of peace.

There were many objects to charm the eye of the gazer; but it was especially pleasant to follow the little boats of quaint forms, as they glided over the stilly waves, now waxing dim in the deep shadow of the overhanging mountain, now disappearing behind some projecting cliff. These miniature barks bore peasants from the labours of the day to their families and their humble cottages; and the light blue smoke that wreathed in the deeper blue shades of the mountain spoke of the evening repast, and merry voices rose in song from the flitting boats and the vineyards far above them.

But the two youths who embarked at Como did not participate in the tranquillity of the scene and season; their countenances and gestures betrayed great agitation, and their voices were hurried and loud. To look at them, however, one could not have deemed that this was their habitual mood, but rather some storm of short duration and rare occurrence, like those that sometimes visit the lake they were crossing, when the winds, from their lofty throne on the Alps, rush fiercely through the ravines and gorges, lash those deep and narrow waters, until they heave like the waves of the ocean, and cast their white foam high up the sides of the precipitous cliffs, or many a rood across the more level parts of the shore.

"I tell you once more," cried Alberto, one of the young men, "I tell you, it cannot be! The tyrant may come, and Lombardy may fall; but Como will not, cannot forget the wrongs and the humiliations she has suffered from proud Milan!"

"Grant me patience, Heaven!" cried Rodoald, to his companion. "Is the remembrance of an ancient enmity between Italians—between men who speak the same tongue, and breathe under the same bright and glorious sky—is this to have force at the approach of a common enemy, and to give us up, one by one, till all are trampled on and chained by the Germans? It is as if brothers

of the same house should lose themselves in unnatural dissensions, whilst the flames were gathering round the patrimonial mansion, and each, instead of uniting his efforts for the general preservation, should occupy himself in subtracting objects of small value, or hope, by the intervention of some miracle, that the all-devouring fire would respect his portion of the inheritance. I tell you, Alberto, that this time Frederick Barbarossa comes not for a transient visit; his barbarous hordes are destined to remain among us until they have drained our life's blood; they will grasp at Cremona as well as Crema; friend and ally as well as foe; Pavia as well as Milan; Lodi and Como as well as Brescia and Tortona. It is not this or that particular state that arouses his hatred and cupidity: it is the whole of the Lombard plain, it is the fruit of Italian ingenuity and Italian commerce, that the barbarian would enjoy; it is the seed of liberty sown in the hearts of the Lombard cities, where it ought to flourish, even as the blessed grain in her fertile plains, that the tyrant would destroy, and for ever. Even we are almost old enough to remember what we must for ever blush at, the Diet of Roncaglia, when the whole of Lombardy prostrated herself and her liberties at the feet of Barbarossa, and unanimous only in their debasement, the bishops, the nobles, and the lawyers of the different cities on the Po, thought, if they exalted the imperial privileges, to secure in return moderation from him as well as peace among themselves. And which state among us did not feel the ruinous effects of that disgraceful day, or rather of our improvident dissension, for the Diet was nothing but a vile pageantry consequent on the Germans' successes? Were not all subjected to a weight of taxes beyond enduring,\* and with a few exceptions, friendly cities, as well as those that had opposed his arms, deprived of their consuls, and governed by an arbitrary podestà,

\* In some parts, it is said, two-thirds of the produce of their lands, the only wealth that remained, were extorted from them by the Imperial officers. It was in vain that they prostrated themselves at the feet of Frederick; he gave, at the best, only vague promises of redress: they were in his eyes rebels; his delegates had acted as faithful officers, whom, even if they had gone a little beyond his intentions, he could not be expected to punish.—Mr. Hallam's *History of the Middle Ages*, Chap. III. Part I.

named by the Emperor—the tyrant's tyrannical slave, who was never a native of the place, and frequently not even an Italian, but a gross, uncouth barbarian, of language and manners entirely differing from our own? Did not all Lombardy, I say, see the spirit of commerce and enterprize depressed almost to extinction by the despoiling and degrading supremacy of the Germans?"

"All this is true," said his companion, interrupting him; "but I cannot forget that even then, when Milan, had risen, as now, with the bold hope of throwing off the yoke, it was found impossible to reconcile the feuds and antipathies of the Lombard cities. I cannot forget how many sent their sons to march under the banners of Frederick Barbarossa, nor with what glee the people of Pavia and Cremona, of Lodi and Como, executed on captured Milan the tyrant's commission to destroy each a certain portion of that proud city.\* These men were only mindful of their old grudges against the Milanese. They joined the barbarians from beyond the mountains in razing the town to the ground; and in a few days, when the pillaged churches stood alone amidst the ruins of what had been Milan, they shouted over the scene of horror and desolation with the rapture of gratified vengeance!"

"A curse on the facts and the recollections!" said Rodoaldo indignantly; "and yet they may serve us as examples. And, pray, was the condition of these insane allies of the tyrant at all bettered? And when they saw the residue of the Milanese people dispersed through the villages in the neighbourhood of their fallen capital, groaning under burthens too heavy to be borne, did they not relent?"

"Nature," said Alberto, "seems to have strongly mixed up the quality of revenge in the elements of the Italian character; and perhaps even then the people of Como remembered that those of Milan had waged against them a desolating and cruel war; and

\* "Les divers quartiers de la cité (Milan) furent partagés entre ses ennemis les plus acharnés, avec ordre de les détruire; chacune des six divisions de la ville, qui prenoit son nom d'une porte, fût livrée à un peuple ennemi: L'orientale aux Lodesans, la Romaine aux Crémonais, la Ticinoise aux Pavésans, la Vercilline aux Novarais, la Comacine aux Comasques, et la porte neuve aux vassaux de Séprio et de Martésana."—Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* chap. ix.

that when, after ten years of heroic resistance, that war was ended by an honourable capitulation, the Milanese disregarded both the letter and spirit of the treaty, and deprived us of our independence."

Rodoaldo, who may be supposed to be a Milanese, bit his lips ere he replied: "My friend, we must bury these things, which will never occur again, in oblivion; the cities that now join cause with us will equally share in all our rights and advantages. Milan, that phoenix-like has sprung from her ruins, only takes the dangerous post of precedence in the contest with the tyrant; if fortune favours our arms, she will affect no superiority or control over the internal government of the cities her allies. Have we not sworn as much on the blessed Cross and the holy Evangelists?"

Alberto shook his head mournfully.

"By Saint Ambrose! you drive me mad," exclaimed the impetuous Rodoaldo. "I can bear no longer this hesitation, this doubting, this cherishing of narrow prejudices and absurd spite, at a time when, as sure as the blessed heavens are spread above us, one general ruin hangs over the head of every land washed by the Adige and the Po! I would plunge to the bottom of this unfathomable lake, rather than see such things; and in a friend whose mind ought to have expanded with study and travel——"

"Rodoaldo," said Alberto reddening, "I speak not of my own conviction or sentiments. I doubt, but not for myself. I could sacrifice at the altar of the Independence of Lombardy whatever little jealousy I may feel as a citizen of Como. Something I may have learned in the journeys we have made together; something from the schools we have frequented. Moreover, my feelings have not been exasperated by actual conflict or existing oppression. I was not born when Milan subverted the liberties of Como. In my days we have both drunk of the same bitter cup of foreign oppression, and Milan has been more grievously oppressed than Como. But my father, who bears on his brow the scars of Milanese wounds, and in his heart the rankling, inveterate recollection of the wars and the losses he suffered during the ten years' war, it is of him I think; his curse would be upon me if I were to join your standard



"Even the paternal malediction would fall upon you innocuously when engaged in so sacred a cause; and it will be converted into a blessing when the hungry Germans shall be driven from our plains, and age and prejudice forced to acknowledge the blessings resulting from the Lombard League."

Alberto really felt with his friend, and acknowledged the truth and the probability of what he so confidently asserted; but he felt also the inveteracy of his father's hatred. He knew the pangs it would give him to see his son abandon him for the field; and filial affection, which was strong among the young man's numerous virtues, struggled with his rational patriotism, his valorous spirit, and other feelings and aspirations busy within him. "You shall have my prayers for the success of your enterprise," said he to his friend in a melancholy tone.

"Your prayers!" said the impetuous Rodoaldo. "And will you stay dreaming over your homilies, like a monk, by this lake's side, when all Lombardy is armed for Liberty, and your friend fighting by the side of the *Carroccio*? It cannot be; you must go with him who has come to seek you!"

"My father is old and infirm; a fit of anger or deep sorrow might carry him to the grave!" sighed Alberto.

"My sister is fair and loved—loved by you, Alberto," cried Rodoaldo; "but, by the rood! if your sword is not raised in the sacred cause of Liberty, instead of favouring your union, as I have done, I will labour as hard to prevent it!"

A blush deeper than scarlet, a blush of mingled displeasure and love, flashed across the handsome, manly features of Alberto; but he said nothing, save, after a brief pause, "Marietta's heart is already mine!"

"And so is my heart—mine in friendship as hers in love," replied Rodoaldo; "but, by heavens——" He here interrupted himself, and checking his heat and loudness of voice by a few moments' silence, continued in a tone that was low and placid, but deep, and infinitely more impressive than his former manner: "Alberto, it is now five years ago, and it was about this season of the year, and on such an evening as this, that you and I, in our travels, stood on

the lofty Alps—there, by the summit of Monte Rosa—and talked of the richness and beauty of Italy at our feet, and of the impossibility, with such a glorious barrier, and were the Italians ever united amongst themselves, of any foreign foe thence intruding upon us. On that very morning you had saved my life by rescuing me in time, by perilling your own, from a falling avalanche; and *then*, when our hearts were exalted by the grandeur of the scene, I pronounced a vow, which you repeated, of eternal friendship. Alberto, I must turn perjured and break that vow if you come not with me to Milan!"

A dead silence ensued. The young men looked in each other's faces. Alberto's eyes filled with tears, and he said:—

"I have not deserved this, Rodoaldo! But dispose of me as you list, rather than deprive me of all that my heart has so long and passionately clung to. I *will* follow you to Milan!" and then clasping his hand over his eyes, and sinking in the bottom of the boat, he moaned—"Oh, my father!" for neither love nor friendship, nor the threat of being deprived of both, could extinguish his filial affection.

Rodoaldo, though invaded at the moment with the all-monopolizing spirit of political partisanship, could not, in his joy at having secured so valuable a confederate, be insensible to the struggles and the sufferings of his friend, whom, next to the liberty of Lombardy, he really loved better perhaps than anything in the world. He spoke kindly to him, flattered him with the glorious prospect of the speedy deliverance of the States of Northern Italy from the Ultramontane oppressors, and the general reconciliation among themselves,—pictured a bright futurity, when the people of Como should no longer hate the people of Milan, and his father should preside with gratified feelings at his marriage with a Milanese maiden,—his own dear sister, whom Alberto should see on the morrow. The latter delightful assurance did more than anything—enlightened and patriotic as he was—towards the calming of the lover's mind.

The friends now were silent, their boat gliding swiftly over the lake, which was covered with the shades of night, darkened by the

lofty mountains. The three hills that enclose the romantic town of Como, with the three fortresses of Castelnovo, Baradello, and Carnesino, on their summits, had long been lost to view in the windings of the lake; villa after villa, and *casale* after *casale*, had been passed, and their voyage now lay through a wild and unfrequented part of the lake, where no cottage light glimmered from the mountain's sides. This solitude and utter stillness affected the minds of the young men,—not a word was spoken on either side, until, on turning a promontory, Rodoaldo stretched out his hand in the direction of a feeble ray of light that trembled in a long uncertain line upon the dingy waters, and exclaimed joyfully, "There is Isola! where we pass the night, and where we shall find friends and motives to revive our spirits and affection for Liberty!"

"Ah! Isola, the old, inveterate enemy of Como, the ally of Milan in former wars!" said Alberto involuntarily, and from the force of long habit, recurring to the feuds, the sympathies and antipathies of his native town.

"Speak no more of these paltry, municipal jealousies," said Rodoaldo, biting his lip: "let us, I say again, no longer remember that we are Comachians or Milanese, or Isolans! Let us be Lombards all—united in one quarrel against one general enemy!"

"Be it even so, and amen!" replied Alberto; but while he assented and composed his mind, he could not look forward with pleasure to the close prospect of becoming the guest of the Isolans,—so heartfelt were the animosities of the miniature republics of Italy at this period, and so tenacious the hold of early prejudice on the mind even of a comparatively very enlightened individual. The young citizen of Como could scarcely have acknowledged, or would have blushed at, what was the fact, that these repugnant feelings had been mainly awakened in his bosom by popular proverbs, and the well-adorned and amplified narratives of nurses and garrulous old men. But thus it is in the early stages of society: an invidious saying will exasperate for ages city against city, and the insane wars of contiguous states have been prolonged by ballads and tales

passing from mouth to mouth, and the first told or sung to childhood, in the tender mind of which they become articles of faith and sources of prejudice, that the philosophy of later years does not suffice to correct.

Meanwhile, the two friends drew near to the Island of Isola, which is situated some sixteen miles to the north of Como, and not more than fifty paces from the shore, to which, indeed, in the obscurity of the night, it seemed to be united. In a few minutes they landed and stood before a low, massy, and most gloom fortress, erected in former ages by some Lombard king, from which proceeded the faint light they had seen across the waters and which was still the only ray that issued from the sepulchre-looking edifice. A certain depression and misgiving fell upon Alberto, in spite of himself; but his more excited companion exclaimed, as they advanced towards the gate,—“This castle was built for the reception and security of the treasures of the Lombard monarchs; but it now contains a treasure more precious than they ever owned,—the pure and imperishable spirit of national liberty!”

“It is a precious gem encased in gross materials!” sighed Alberto.

“Then, be it our care to enshrine it in splendour, and beauty, and might!” cried Rodoaldo; and he blew a peculiar blast on a horn that hung suspended by an iron chain from the iron-bound gate of the fortress. The noise of voices and hurried feet was instantly heard from within: the next minute a friendly voice, from a grating above the gateway, said inquiringly, “Rodoaldo?” The Milanese replied, “It is the same;” and instantly the heavy portal grated on its hinges, admitting him and Alberto to the court of the castle, where already several men, whose figures and countenances could not be distinguished in the deep obscurity which was very partially dispersed by a pine-tree torch, stood ready to receive the gallant Milanese.

After a few hurried words of salutation, Rodoaldo inquired whether all the deputies had arrived, naming several individuals of character and consequence in the districts about the Lake of Como,

and some with whom Alberto was unacquainted. The reply was satisfactory,—all were there, and only waiting for him to begin their deliberations. The Milanese then grasped his friend by the arm, crossed the court, and entering by the low arched door of a quadrangular tower, and ascending a staircase, the high stone steps of which seemed to have been calculated for the proportions of giants, anon reached a ruinous but spacious hall, where the night wind sighed and the bats flitted, but no other sounds or living objects presented themselves. “I will onward to our chamber of secret council,” said Rodoaldo to his friend, “and proclaim you as a convert to the good cause, and formally announce your arrival ; for, ’ faith, there be some within who would not look kindly on the sudden intrusion of your father’s son !” The Milanese passed on ; his associates, who had followed him from the court-yard, trod on his steps, which were illuminated by the torch, the only light ; and Alberto was left alone and in darkness. His situation—his so suddenly embarking in a project full of peril—the dread of his parent’s curse—the last sentence of his friend’s address, which was certainly inconsiderately pronounced, awoke again his depression and misgivings. His heart was bold, but it died away within him, when, in this state of mind, the ill-omened hooting of an owl burst on the death-like silence of the spot, and the broad eyes of the bird of night and of ruins glared at him through the palpable obscurity of that dilapidated hall. It was not fear, not personal or mortal fear, for his confidence in the friendship of Rodoaldo, who had brought him thither, was perfect,—it was an unearthly awe, a creeping over of superstition and early horror, that moved him, and made him feel as though he were about to traverse the regions of woe and death. Nor was this feeling entirely subdued by the return of Rodoaldo, who came to conduct him to the council-room ; and he followed his friend as if he expected to be introduced to a society of fiends.

The light of many cressets suspended from the roof of this inner apartment—a fire that blazed on the hearth, for that place was cold at night even in the spring season,—and the welcoming smiles of benignant faces, soon, however, chased the gloom from his mind.

Respectable burghers from different cities in the neighbourhood, sundry nobles from their Lombard castles, and more than one bishop, composed the assembly, who all saluted the young citizen of Como, hailing him as a valuable colleague in the cause of Lombard Independence. They then proceeded to the business of the night, which was principally to concert measures for the defence of Milan and her allies against the Emperor Barbarossa, who, it had been learned by her emissaries, was preparing to march in person to decide the contest, whilst his agents in Italy were busy with the seduction of bribery and promises in endeavouring to detach from the Lombard League the cities which had signified their adhesion to it. Other subjects, which were the reasons why that meeting was held in a secluded spot, and with secrecy, were discussed. Many of the persons present were delegates from cities still under the direct sway or influence of the Germans, and where strong parties in favour of the Imperialists existed ; and it behoved them to arrange how and when they were to raise the free standard of the League, and how gain over districts and persons to their side. These various and frequently thorny discussions, the unanimity of feeling and intent, however, of which augured well for their final success, lasted far into the night ; nor was it until every point was arranged that the assembled patriots partook of refreshments, and prepared to depart quietly to their respective homes.

As Rodoaldo and his friend embarked on the lake to gain the point the nearest to the city of Milan, the grey dawn was slowly breaking on the boldly picturesque scene. The sides of the mountains, which had looked like tall, straight walls, began to show their varying forms, their slopes and inequalities ; a broad and brightening streak of light rested on their lofty tops ; the vapours curled away from the bosom of the lake, whose clear waters anon reflected the giants that girded them in ; the early morning chill of the atmosphere retired, and light, and life, and genial warmth, so delicious to those who have travelled by night, and frequented damp and dark places, prevailed the air. Cheerful words succeeded to musing silence ; and the young men spoke

with enthusiasm, which was in itself gratitude, of the beautiful land which Heaven had destined to be the land of their birth.

"Ah, see!" said Alberto, "thither, through that opening in the mountain to the east, how the glad sun rises in his golden panoply! How glorious such a morning after such a night!"

"So shall the Sun of Freedom rise on the night of our oppression!" cried Rodoaldo joyfully; and Alberto having been aroused into enthusiasm for the cause in which he was embarked, by the spirit and propriety he had witnessed in the Castle of Isola, they both shouted triumphantly, as if the battle were already won.

From the shores of the lake, where the young men landed, a walk of an hour brought them to a small town. Here they procured horses, and continued their journey towards Milan.

When Rodoaldo, crossing the beautiful rich plain that surrounds it, came in sight of that goodly city, his heart bounded with patriotic feeling, and the hope—the passionate hope—that ere long he should see it for ever liberated from the degrading, consuming oppression of the barbarians from beyond the mountains. His friend re-echoed his hopes and shared his feelings; but the heart of Alberto overflowed at moments with other sentiments besides them, for there, within those walls, was his first love. Every step brought him nearer to the gentle Marietta: he should see her again—see her on whom he could gaze until the sense of sight failed him—he should catch again the sounds of that silvery voice, whose tender parting words had never quitted his ear.

About an hour before noon the travellers reached the city. They were scarcely within its gates when Alberto was sensibly struck by the universal stir and animation that prevailed. Masons were labouring in repairing and increasing the walls and fortifications; carpenters were constructing *balestre*, and other of the more massy engines of warfare; the anvils of the smiths forging warlike weapons and armour rang in every street; and every art that could be available in a military sense seemed to be most industriously employed. In the squares of the city were citizens of all years, from beardless youth to grey-headed age, exercising the manœuvres and the weapons of the field. Every face they met wore a busy,

an anxious, but not an alarmed expression; for the Milanese confided in their unanimity and determination, and saw the storm of war approaching them without a wish to shrink from it. The children in the streets were seen throwing stones or sticks at figures of straw they christened Barbarossa; and the crones at the doors or windows of the houses were heard every moment to interlard their discourse with the words of "The League," "The Emperor," "The freedom of Lombardy," and others of lofty signification.

"The spirit of Liberty, which ought to raise the very dead, and call our oppressed fathers from their tombs, is abroad among us! But draw rein; we are at home!" gaily exclaimed Rodoaldo.

The friends dismounted before an extensive building, and, giving their horses to an attendant, entered and ascended the staircase with hastened steps. The name of Rodoaldo, and the sound of his voice, had brought his affectionate parents and sister from their apartment to the top of the stairs, and he was clasped in their embrace; while Alberto stood by, with glowing cheek and beating heart, admiring the improved beauty and grace of Marietta, who blushed deeply as her eye met his.

When they had entered the apartment and closed the door, Rodoaldo's father, who had received Alberto in the warmest and kindest manner, said in an undertone of voice: "My son, your absence has been long; but I need not ask whether it has been well employed. If nothing result from it but the gaining over of your friend here to our sacred cause, it will repay us all. Is it not so, Alberto? You are with us against the tyrant?"

Alberto, who had just interchanged another glance with the fair daughter of the house, which could have made him abandon everything to be near to her and dear to her, replied with enthusiasm, "I am yours till death! Let the fight rage when it will, I will never quit the side of my friend, or the party I have espoused!"

"And he who is unfortunately our old foe, and should be such no longer, your father, has he forgotten ancient prejudices, and perhaps some ancient wrongs, received from Milan, and embraced our party, which is that of all Lombardy? Has he detached any



of his friends from the banners of Barbarossa, or is Como still unanimously against us?" cautiously inquired the old Milanese patriot, who had indulged some hopes that his son might not only gain his friend Alberto, but raise, through his means, an anti-imperialist party in the city of Como.

A cloud of sadness passed over the brow of Alberto at being thus immediately recalled to the recollection of his abandoned, infirm father, and his invincible prejudices and hatred of the Milanese; and he explained, in a hesitating and somewhat reserved manner, that his sire and his sire's colleagues and friends, with indeed all Como, were as inveterate as ever, and only waited the summons of the Emperor to join his forces against Milan and the League. He said nothing of the difficulty he had experienced in his own mind at taking the step he had done, nor did Rodoaldo ever refer to it.

After a simple repast and a short repose, called for by the want of sleep the preceding night, the two friends repaired to an assembly of the Milanese citizens, where Alberto, introduced by the father of Rodoaldo, was received with acclamations, and, at his friends' united request, admitted a member of the cohort of the *Carroccio*, or Car, which was composed of three hundred young men (the sacred number of Leonidas!) of the first families of the Republic, who had sworn to die rather than abandon on the field that Palladium of their city. Alberto took the solemn vow which bound him to Milan; but as he could not do it without thinking of Como and his father, his voice faltered as he delivered it. After the breaking up of the assembly, the friends attended the exercises of the important corps of cavalry to which they now both belonged. The rest of the day was spent in various occupations of importance; but the evening, the delicious evening, at the home of Rodoaldo, and with the gentle Marietta, in the social circle.

In this manner several days passed. Without any express declaration or overtures on the part of the family, Alberto was treated as one who was shortly to become a member of it, and allowed all an accepted lover's privileges.

One evening, as Marietta, whose young affections fully corresponded to her lover's, was walking in an open corridor at the back of the house, which overlooked a pleasant garden, she was surprised at the impatiently expected approach of Alberto, to see his face, instead of being radiant with smiles, downcast and troubled; and when he spoke to her, his voice was hollow and inharmonious. Startled, she turned her affectionate, innocent eyes towards his; they were red, as though he had wept, and, by a sympathy rapid as a flash of lightning, tears rushed to her own.

"Sweet Marietta! what means this?" inquired Alberto, grasping her trembling hand.

"Say, rather, what mean your grief and agitation?" she said, after a minute's silence, and a struggle to find her voice; "but I see how it is," she continued: "you regret having abandoned your home and all your friends for us in an hour of trouble—you grieve——"

"I grieve, sweet Marietta, that my father should have felt my absence, as I feared he would, and that he should now be on a lonely bed of sickness," replied Alberto; "but I never can regret being with you and my friend, whatever troubles may surround you!"

"Ah, say you so in truth? is your father sick, and all through my brother and—*me*?—for you have told me that the considerations of my love had a principal share in your motives for joining our party, and that——" she interrupted herself and blushed.

"It is true, that without the strong attractions of friendship and love, I scarcely should have quitted my old father's side, although I felt as every Lombard ought to feel, and loathed the tyranny of Barbarossa; it is also true that my absence has so afflicted my father—so enraged him, for he has learned whither I have repaired, that he has fallen seriously ill. I have just learned this intelligence secretly; and though a patriot, a devoted friend, a passionate lover, I cannot forget that I am a son!" When Alberto paused, the tears were again rolling in his eyes,

"Flee hence, then! leave my brother—leave *me*! and return to your father!" cried the generous girl.

"That cannot be, sweet maid!" sadly replied Alberto; "no,

though my father die alone, leaving me his curse. I am enrolled in the cohort of the Carroccio; I am bound to it by a solemn vow; and were I not, I could not return to Como, where my defection is known, and every hand would be armed against me!"

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed Marietta, "it must be as you say; but your father must not be left alone to anguish of mind and sickness of body, whilst you, his only son, the prop of his age, are here, abandoning everything for *me*!—I would say, for *us*. It must not be, indeed it must not." She was silent; and turning from her lover, leaned on the parapet for awhile, as if in deep and important reflection. She then suddenly approached Alberto, and taking his hands in both of hers, said with extreme passion and tenderness, "I feel to my heart's core the extent of the sacrifices you have made: would that I could equal them, to prove my affection to you, and again I say, Alberto, your father must not be left to solitary, unsoothed suffering! by the blessed Madonna! he shall not."

The young citizen of Como saw, as she spoke, a certain flush of countenance and a look of high and fixed resolve; but he could not for a moment have conceived to what that was to lead. This, however, was all revealed on the following morning, when Marietta was nowhere to be found in the mansion of her father.

The astonished Alberto related what had passed between them the preceding evening to the alarmed family, who concluded at once that she must have fled to Como, though they could not understand how, nor reflect without the most harrowing apprehensions on the dangers to which their lovely and delicate Marietta must be exposed on such a journey, when the whole country was overrun by troops. But we must leave the description of the vain pursuit after the fugitive, the affliction of the family, and the mingled fear and admiration of her lover, to turn to the tempest-cloud that was now about to burst on the plains of Lombardy.

The Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, whose courage was tarnished by ferocity, and his talent by duplicity and broken faith, had crossed the Alps of Savoy, and entered Italy by Mont Cenis and the city of Suza, which he savagely delivered to the flames early

in the autumn of the preceding year. He indeed came with a resolution to extinguish for ever the spirit of independence in the Lombard cities, to destroy what the experience of years had taught him would never be obedient to his authority, and to avenge himself by the fire and the sword, for an aggravating series of obstacles and humiliations received from the people of Upper Italy. Milan, which had been razed to the ground by his troops and vindictive Italian allies, but rebuilt in spite of him, and inhabited by free and bold citizens, among whom "the strong spirit of national liberty, imperishable among the imperishable armies of her patriots, inconsumable in the conflagration of their city," was pronounced, and as hardy as ever, the fair and populous Milan, as the chief of the Lombard League, and who animated all the rest, was the foremost object in that powerful monarch's hatred. Against this city, Barbarossa, exasperated by the failure of the siege of Alexandria, a new Lombard city, which had risen as if by magic to assert the cause of Italian liberty, and by many other disgraceful reverses almost maddening to a nature like his, was now on the point of carrying the whole force of his united armies. At the opening of our tale he was at Pavia, about sixteen miles from Milan, concentrating his troops and anxiously expecting reinforcements of Germans and Flemings from beyond the Alps. A few days after the disappearance of Marietta, it was known at Milan that those reinforcements, the vassals of the Archbishop of Magdebourg, the Archbishop of Cologne, and other bishops and princes of the empire, whom Frederic had enjoined to make a last great effort for the re-establishment of the Imperial authority in Lombardy, had arrived, by the country of the Grisons, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Lake of Como; and that the Emperor, secretly departing from his quarters at Pavia, was on the march to meet them. The movements of Frederic Barbarossa were always rapid. He met his troops—he feasted their leaders for one day in the city of Como, and on the morrow marched at their head against the Castle of Legnano, an important place within the Milanese territory. The people of Como followed him to the field.

It had hitherto been the system of the Italian confederates to

exhaust the German armies by long sieges. They had made some progress in military architecture : the agency of gunpowder was unknown : the ultramontane soldiers were ignorant of the arts of slow attack ; and within their walled towns the Italians had the advantage, which was always considered favourable to Barbarossa and his northern cavalry in a pitched battle or an open field. But so much had the spirit of the Milanese risen, that this time they resolved to meet the Imperialists in the plain, and this too without waiting the arrival of many of their allies.

On a lovely morning, at the end of the month of May, when the rich country, so soon to be dyed with blood, was most gay and verdant, Alberto and Rodoaldo, riding side by side in the gallant cohort of the Three Hundred, issued from Milan with the Carroccio of the Republic. This sacred Palladium had been invented about a hundred and thirty-seven years before the present contest, by Eriberto, a warlike archbishop of Milan. It was a strong car upon four red wheels, drawn by oxen, having a high mast decorated with two white banners and crowned with a golden ball, and in the centre of the car was the image of the crucifix. It was the custom, whenever they took the field, to conduct the Carroccio in the midst of the army, and its sight was supposed to inspire courage in the breasts of the combatants ; whilst the boldest and most distinguished were bound by an oath to defend it, and all were taught to consider its loss to the enemy as the most serious of calamities and the greatest disgrace.\* On the present

\* Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, ann. 1039. This custom became general throughout Lombardy, each city having its Carroccio. I extract with pleasure the following excellent passage from Mr. G. Perceval's *History of Italy* :—

“ But a singular invention marked at once the rudeness and the wisdom of the tactics which regulated the free militia of Lombardy. This was the Carroccio, or great standard car of the State : it is said to have been first used by Eribert, Archbishop of Milan, in the war of 1035, in which the citizens supported him against the rural nobility, and it soon came to be introduced into the array of all the republics. It was a car upon four wheels, painted red, and so heavy that it was drawn by four pair of oxen with splendid trappings of scarlet. In the centre, raised upon a mast which was crowned by a golden orb, floated the banner of the Republic, and beneath it the Saviour, extended on the cross, appeared to pour benedictions on the surrounding host. Two platforms occupied the car in front and behind the mast,—the first filled with a

occasion the old and massy car was splendidly decorated, and drawn by six milk-white steers. Two venerable priests stood by the side of the crucifix, and the rest of the car was filled by a band that played inspiring music as it advanced. The cohort closed around it at every pause or halt, with jealous care.

The corps next in excellence to that in which the two friends served was another cohort of cavalry, consisting of nine hundred chosen men, and denominated "The Cohort of Death." The rest of the forces were, six battalions of Milanese, who followed the standard of the six gates of the city, under the command of the officers of their respective districts; the militia of Piacenza, and some centurions *d'élite* from their other confederates, Verona, Brescia, Novara, and Vercelli.

This army of free citizens, animated to a man with the enthusiastic love of Liberty, boldly advanced to meet the mercenaries and the enslaved vassals of Germany, by the road which leads from Milan to the shores of Lake Maggiore. At Barano, in the fertile plain situated between the two rivers—the Ticino and the Olonna—they halted, and sent forward seven hundred horse to reconnoitre. This body fell in with an advanced guard of three hundred

few of the most valiant soldiers of the army, the chosen guard of the standard,—the latter with a band of martial music. Feelings of religion and of military glory were strangely associated with the Carroccio. It was an imitation of the Jewish Ark of the Covenant, and it was from its platform that a chaplain administered the holy offices of Christianity to the army. It thus became sacred in the eyes of the citizens, and to suffer it to fall into the hands of an enemy entailed intolerable disgrace. The thickest of the battle ever encircled the Carroccio: it guided the advance; the duty of its defence gave order and a rallying point in retreat; and it was in every situation calculated to remedy the absence of discipline and the unskilfulness of military movement which belonged to that age. It afforded a common centre, a principle of weight and depth and solidity, to the untrained infantry of the citizens, and enabled them to resist without difficulty the impetuous charges of the feudal chivalry. In this respect the Carroccio was a most sagacious expedient, and completely answered the purpose of its inventor, in rendering the cavalry of the feudal nobles powerless against the thick masses of the burghers; and if the movements of the car were incompatible with celerity of operations, this defect could be little appreciated where to move without confusion at all had been previously unknown. To march straightforward to an enemy, and to fight, were the only tactics: the ranged battle, or the predatory incursion to carry off the harvests of a foe, the only business of a campaign." Chap. ii. part i.

cavalry, which was followed at a short distance by the whole of the Imperial army. The Lombards made a vigorous charge that disconcerted the Germans, but were obliged to retire before Barbarossa, who hurried on with his main body. They rallied round the Carroccio.

The two armies were now close to each other on a spot called Legnano,—a name to be sacred in after-times as connected with the triumph of Liberty—a spot to which the oppressed Italians ought to perform devout pilgrimages, to catch the glorious spirit of their forefathers, and worship where they bled. For a while there was a silent and solemn pause in both armies. Rodoaldo, from his post by the side of the Carroccio, gazed with impatience and deadly hate at the forces arrayed against them,—he had no other feelings at the moment; but the heart of Alberto was agonized at seeing the banners of Como, his own friends and fellow-citizens, in the enemy's ranks. He was sickening at the thought of dyeing his blade with the blood of such as they, when the German trumpets sounded the charge and aroused him to more active occupation.

As the Imperialists came on at full gallop, the Lombards threw themselves on their knees and addressed aloud their prayers to God, to Saint Peter, and Saint Ambrose; the priests from the Carroccio gave the encouraging assurance that the God of Battles would be with those who fought in so justifiable a cause; then the cymbals rang and the trumpets of the Confederates gave back the enemy's challenge; and starting to their feet, and waving their banners over their heads, the Lombard citizens marched boldly forward to meet the shock of the German chivalry.

The manœuvres and weapons that can make infantry so formidable to cavalry were not then in use. The Lombard foot were thrown into confusion by an impetuous charge, and retreated towards the protecting shadow of the holy car. Then the cohort of the Carroccio, with Rodoaldo and Alberto shouting in its van, darted against the Germans. The plain shook as if moved by an earthquake, under the rush and the bound of so many hoofs; the chargers neighed; the swords flashed in the rays of the noonday

sun, and the shout and the curse of the combatants floated discordantly on the balmy air. The youths of Milan emulated the valour of the Spartan "three hundred," but they were borne back by the superior weight of the German cavalry, who came so near to the sacred car that the Milanese expressed by a wild cry—a shriek of horror—their dread that the Palladium would be captured. Then the Cohort of Death, enthusiastically repeating their vow to conquer or die, brandished their well-tempered swords, and spurred their gallant steeds against the Imperialists. The charge of nine hundred such men as they must be tremendous! Their concentrated, close attack, and their headlong speed, confounded the Germans, accustomed to despise the cavalry of Italy: the Imperialists wavered and fell back. The shout that arose from the Confederates was now a shout of triumph. The Cohort of Death followed up its charge—they seized the Imperial standard—and in another part of the line Barbarossa himself, who was fighting like a lion in the foremost rank, was wounded and thrown from his horse. The contest ended here, for the rest of the day's business was pursuit and slaughter. The victorious Lombards followed the fleeing Germans to the distance of eight miles from the field of battle, and forced a great number of the fugitives to throw themselves into the river Ticino. The conquerors, however, as usual, in those days, stained their glorious victory by cruelty, and this cruelty was most exercised against those who were not Germans, but Italians—Lombards like themselves—neighbours, living but a few miles apart. The citizens of Como who had taken part in the battle were nearly all slain on the field, nor could the humane exertions of Alberto, aided by his friend Rodoaldo, always succeed in securing mild treatment to the few who were made prisoners. Meanwhile, the rich spoils of the abandoned camp of the Imperialists were secured by the Confederates; but though he was seen to fall on the field of Legnano, the body of the Emperor, wounded or dead, was vainly sought for among the heaps of slain.

The enthusiastic feeling of the ancient Israelites at the spectacle of the Ark—an object that patriotism as well as their religion ren-



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The enthusiastic feeling of the ancient Israelites at the spectacle of the Ark—an object that patriotism as well as their religion ren-

dered sacred to all eyes—could not have surpassed in vehemence that of the Milanese on the return of their sacred Carroccio. The air was rent with their acclamations, and as was practised before the older Palladium just referred to, youths and maidens danced as the white oxen slowly dragged the car to the city gates.

The decisive victory of the confederated cities of Lombardy over the more professionally warlike Germans, and the importance of its results, fully authorized the days of festivity that followed. Indeed there was every appearance that their inveterate and redoubtable enemy, Frederic Barbarossa, had for ever “ceased to trouble ;” for it was ascertained that he had not made his appearance among his soldiers and the fugitives from the field of Legnano ; and that the Empress, whom he had left at Pavia, had assumed a widow’s mourning.

In the meantime, Alberto, suffering somewhat severely from wounds received in the battle, remained in the house of Rodoaldo, where the absence of the fair Marietta was still mourned, and her fate unascertained. That she had fled with the generous intention of supplying by some means or other, and to some degree, the place of Alberto by the side of his suffering and solitary father, had indeed been imagined from the first ; but so difficult had communication become between Milan and Como—so near but so inimical to each other—that they had not been able to learn whether she had surmounted the difficulties of the journey, or what had befallen her. The harrowing anxiety and uncertainty as to Marietta’s fate did not contribute to heal her lover’s wounds.

At length, however, there seemed a channel by which to obtain some information ; for, invited by their captive relatives, certain distinguished citizens of Como arrived at Milan to treat of ransom, and it might be hoped, to pave the way to a reconciliation between the two states. But when the father of the maiden had an interview with these individuals he could at first only learn that Alberto’s sire had been sick to death, but was better ; and that they had observed no strange lady about his house, which they were in the habit of visiting, either during his illness or his convalescence. Indeed no person answering to the description of the Milanese

maiden had been seen anywhere in the city of Como. Touched by the distress of the Milanese, one of the party, who was himself the father of a lovely daughter, youthful and innocent like Marietta, and who could appreciate a father's feelings, promised on his return to Como to make the most diligent inquiries. And with this promise old Rodoaldo was obliged to content himself for the present.

A week elapsed ere a message was received from the person who had undertaken the task ; and when it came, it did not convey the shadow of satisfaction, but, on the contrary, tended to confirm the most dreadful fears of Alberto and the family of Marietta. It stated that no stranger of any sort had visited Alberto's father ; that no young Milanese of either sex had been seen to enter the gates of Como, or could be found within its walls, where indeed no native of Milan, though endowed with ever so much beauty, and a woman, could have been safe at that crisis from the fury of the people of Como. By the same conveyance that had brought such alarming intelligence as regarded his love, Alberto received a letter from his father, to whom he had written to explain his conduct, to deplore his sire's sickness, and to beseech his pardon. That letter was short, but terrible. The old citizen of Como, irritated anew by the slaughter of his countrymen at the battle of Legnano, scorned the prospect of a general confederation for the independence of Lombardy, and the friendship of the Milanese. He called on his son to return home. He would secure his pardon from his fellow-citizens, by whom he had acted a traitor's part, dyeing his hands in their blood ;—but if he came not forthwith, he would be the first to propose against him a sentence of eternal proscription, and he would leave Alberto nothing but his anathema when he descended into that tomb which his apostacy had dug for him.

The heart of the unfortunate and susceptible youth was again a prey to contending affections ; but feeling he could not abandon his friend and the cause of the Lombard League, whose full glory and importance were now luminously evident to him, and dearer than they had ever been, and still entertaining perhaps a lingering hope that Marietta might be found living and be restored to her family and to his arms, he wrote another deprecatory letter to his

father, and remained at Milan. Had he returned to Como, he might have found to his cost that all his sire's influence in the city could not have saved him from the vengeance of his countrymen, despite of his forbearance in battle and all his exertions to preserve them in the hour of victory ; and it will not detract from his character for courage, if we admit the supposition that this consideration, though not advanced to his father, and perhaps hardly acknowledged to himself, might have had a share in his decision not to go home.

The fond hopes, however, of recovering Marietta every day waxed fainter and fainter, and were at length succeeded by a confirmed despair of ever seeing her again. Ingenuity and industry were exhausted in her pursuit ; every place between Milan and Como, the towns on the two lakes of Como and Maggiore, whether in the interests of the League or its enemies, were searched by well-paid emissaries ; even Pavia, where the German banner still floated, was perambulated by those who sought the stray maiden ; and so at length was every corner of Lombardy, and all its retreats and monasteries, but Marietta was nowhere to be found.

The public events that occurred during these of a private nature were of the first importance, and of a character to claim and finally to absorb the attention even of those the most distracted by individual calamities and interests.

A few days after the glorious victory of Legnano, a toil-worn man, with anxious and alarmed eyes, and the deep impress of woe on his face, was seen crawling along the banks of the Ticino, whose waters ran on rapidly and joyously to mingle in with the Po, the king of Italy's rivers. He was approaching Pavia, and his faint steps were somewhat quickened, and his gloomy countenance was irradiated with a brief smile, as he caught a view of the walls and towers of that royal city, that was reflected on the expanding bosom of the fair river that bathes and defends it. He stopped on his way, and, stooping down to the water's brink, washed his besmeared face. The cool wave seemed to revive him ; and when he rose, he arranged his tattered and soiled garments, and

walked on with a bearing more dignified than could have been expected from one in the costume of a Lombard peasant. Presently he reached one of the lesser gates of Pavia, which opened on the river; the gate was closed, but he beat loudly against it with his feet, and called on the guard to open it, with a voice of thunder. "Who is the ill-bred churl that clamours thus?" cried a soldier, eyeing the abject-looking wayfarer from a loop-hole. "What hound of a Lombard——" But at once he was tongue-tied. The stranger dashed his huge rustic cap to the ground, threw back his matted hair with both his hands, and discovered the royal and imposing features of Frederic Barbarossa! And the horror-struck eyes of the German soldier saw no ghost, for it was indeed the Emperor who thus, alone and forlorn, entered Pavia.

Barbarossa, whose death had been mourned by his friends, and rejoiced at by his foes, had only been severely wounded and bruised at the battle of Legnano. How he escaped from that field, and the pursuit, are curious facts which none have explained; but it should seem that he had concealed himself somewhere, until his recruited strength had enabled him to gain the only city in Lombardy on which he could now depend, in the lowly disguise of a boor of the country. These humiliating changes of fortune might have taught the tyrant—ambition's slave—many a useful lesson. "Twenty-two years," says the historian, who has given order and elegance to the confused and inelegant chronicles of the times—"twenty-two years had passed since this same monarch had, for the first time, devastated the Milanese territory. During his long reign, he had successively conducted or called into Italy, from the depth of Germany, seven formidable armies. Half a million of men at least had been armed in his cause; torrents of blood had been shed; and, after victories more brilliant than useful, he finished by sustaining defeat at a few miles from the spot where he had erected his first trophies! The Roman Pontiffs had called down on his head the vengeance of Heaven; and his discouraged partisans believed that in their own misfortunes, as in his, they recognised a divine punishment. There now remained no other

course to take than that of peace, and Frederic sincerely determined to seek it."\*

Such was the result of the persevering, long struggle of the free cities of Lombardy, and such will be the final triumph of all those who are animated, not by vague dreams, the abstractions of a theorist, or the stepping-stones of a demagogue, but by the rational intolerance of real and tangible oppression, by the hatred of foreign tyranny, by the unconquerable spirit of Liberty, accompanied with manly prudence, unanimity, and perseverance. Had the spirit of the Lombard League endured and spread as it ought to have done, not merely the fertile plains washed by the Adige and the Po, but the whole of that lovely land—" *ch' Apennin parte, e'l mar circonda e le Alpi*"—might have been rescued then from its interminable series of degrading slavery. But the favourable opportunity was lost.

As soon as Frederic Barbarossa had adopted the tardy and most unpalatable resolution of seeking peace, he addressed himself to the Pope, with whom he had long been at enmity and even open war, through the medium of his archbishops of Magdebourg, Mayence, and Worms. The Roman Pontiff, whose example has been but too rarely followed by those who have worn the tiara, had espoused the cause of the Lombards and Liberty; and, at the first audience given to the Imperial ambassadors, he declared in a positive manner that he would never separate his interests from theirs, nor listen to reconciliation, unless they, with the King of Sicily and the Emperor of the East, were included in the treaty. The Pope Alexander, however, swerved from this line of conduct in the course of the secret conferences which ensued. The German archbishops renouncing for their master the schism into which he had fallen, and the antipopes he had created, Barbarossa was released from the ecclesiastical interdict, and received into the embrace of the Church; while only a general truce, which was intended to affect all the parts of Italy, was stipulated for in favour of the brave

Lombards. But the Pope then assumed the character of mediator between the cities of the League and the Emperor, and promised to repair to Lombardy in order to reconcile their differences. After numerous difficulties as to the choice of the city where the congress should be held, and the Pope should meet the Emperor, the towns of Lombardy were put aside, and the neutral Republic of Venice was chosen as the fittest place; and there the Pope arrived in the spring of the following year, with the ambassadors of the King of Sicily. Some of the Lombard deputies had preceded him; the rest soon followed; and at the end of May, about the anniversary day of their victory of Legnano, the Congress was opened. Two free peoples, the Venetians and the Lombards, were now to witness the humiliation of a despot.

On the 6th of the ides of July, the German ambassador swore to a perpetual peace with the Church,—to a fifteen years' peace with the King of Sicily,—to a truce (whose provisional terms were all favourable and honourable to the Lombards) of six years with the free cities of the League;—and then, and not till then, Frederic Barbarossa was permitted to enter Venice. Six splendid galleys of the Republic were despatched to convey the Emperor from the neighbouring Island of Chiozza, where he had been residing during part of the negotiations; and on a lovely summer evening he was landed at St. Nicholas de Lido, and conducted to a residence the Venetian Signiory had prepared for his reception. The next day was appointed for the formal reception, and solemn and general reconciliation.

At an early hour in the morning, the Pope ascended the galleys of the King of Sicily, which had conveyed him to Venice, and, followed by the Ambassadors of that sovereign and the Lombard deputies, repaired to the great square of Saint Mark. A simultaneous movement brought Frederic Barbarossa to the same place, under the honourable escort of Sebastiano Zani, the Doge of Venice, the patriarch and the chief of the Venetian clergy. The population of the thriving Republic crowded Saint Mark's. The Emperor, who, in the hour of his pride, had made and unmade popes at his fantasy, or as it accorded with his in-



terest, no sooner saw the Pontiff than he threw off his imperial mantle, and, advancing with signs of contrition and humility, prostrated himself before him and kissed his feet. Yes! the warrior knelt to the priest, but it was the sword of the free Lombards that had rendered him so humble; and the first lesson—"to lay aside his leonine ferocity, and put on the mildness of the lamb,"\*—had been taught him by his reverses at Legnano, and the consequences that followed the Lombard Confederation.

The Pope Alexander deigned to raise the imperial and kneeling Suabian; and giving him the kiss of peace, they entered together the great cathedral church, followed by the foreign ambassadors and deputies, and the nobles of Venice. A *Te Deum* was chanted, the banners of the Republic were displayed, and the shouting Venetians enjoyed the self-flattering spectacle, in which, within their walls, and under their auspices, Italy and Germany, the Empire and the Church, gave the hand to each other, in sign of mutual pardon and peace.†

At the termination of the divine office, the Pope rose under a canopy of purple and gold, whilst Barbarossa knelt penitently on the ground, and withdrew the sentence of excommunication he had launched against that sovereign and his subjects. The Emperor then conducted the Pope to the gate of the temple, and having again received the words of peace and forgiveness, he fell back among his ambassadors and attendants, and the Pontiff proceeded in the midst of the archbishops and bishops, all clothed in their church robes, being followed by the Doge and senators of Venice.

Among the many thousands who had witnessed this imposing scene, were the two friends Rodoaldo and Alberto, who had come with the Milanese deputation, and had asserted the rights of Lombardy in council with as much success as they had fought for them in the field. They were following with their eyes the splendid pageantry around the Pope, and scarcely noticing the humbler retinue of the Emperor, when Alberto felt his arm twitched by

\* Romuald. Salernitan. Chron. apud Script. Rer. Ital. tom. vii. p. 229.

† Lettere su Venezia.

somebody in the crowd ; he turned and saw a delicate-looking youth trembling by his side, and gazing alternately in his face and his friend's with the greatest eagerness. He gently inquired the will of the stranger who thus familiarly claimed his attention. The youth, who trembled still more violently, and seemed so near to drop, that Alberto caught him by the arm, was clad in the attire of a page and a German, but his speech was Italian. "I would converse with you,—with both of you,—in some spot less frequented," were the scarcely audible words of the young stranger ; but there was a Milanese accent, and something more, in their tone that deeply moved the friends.

"Let us retire, then, behind the church," said Alberto, leading the youth by the arm, who certainly could not have forced his way through the crowd, or even have walked without some such assistance.

The part of the square of St. Mark they repaired to was entirely deserted, the whole of the people having followed the procession ; and no sooner were they there, than the page, quitting the arm of Alberto, threw his own round the neck of Rodcaldo, who had more than half-guessed the sequel of the mysterious summons ; and, asking whether he could forgive and receive to his heart an unfortunate fugitive, stood revealed the Maid of Milan, the fair Marietta ! A short moment was all the lover could allow the brother ; and Alberto embraced his long-lost bride, whom he had believed dead, and whose re-appearance was as strange and unexpected as her disappearance had been. Marietta, who had borne so much since last they had met, and conducted herself with a firmness and resoluteness miraculous in her sex and age, now fainted in that fond embrace.

Whilst Rodoaldo ran to procure water, the lover had time to discover how she could have been for a moment unrecognisable even to the eye of love. Her long, dark locks, that had floated in their beauty and luxuriance around her moon-like face, and over her delicate shoulders, were all shorn ; the German cap she had worn when his eye first caught a glance of her had shaded her face ; and that face itself was so bronzed and roughened with toil

and exposure to the scorching sun of the South, that it hardly could have been supposed to belong to the exquisitely soft, white neck he now unbuttoned. Her loose garb, too, was well calculated equally to conceal the feminine proportions of her figure ; and, in fine, her whole disguise was so admirably arranged, that none in looking at her could have dreamed of the sex and the beauty beneath it.

On recovering, a blush, scarcely traced on her darkened countenance, but that glowed on her open neck and delicate bosom like fire, showed the confusion of the maiden. She arranged her masculine attire, and, turning from the ardent gaze of her lover to her brother, presently made a hurried but spirited reply to their hasty inquiries, but not before she had received from her relative's lips the incessantly desired intelligence that her father—that her dear mother—that Alberto's father, were alive and well.

"Rodoaldo," said the generous, heroic girl, "when I heard of the sickness and loneliness of his father, and saw Alberto's affliction, I could not bear the thought that all this was attributable to you—to *me!* or that while he quitted his home and incurred his parent's curse for us, we should make no sacrifice on our part for him. I determined then, suddenly but firmly, to make my way to Como—to contrive, in the guise of a domestic or a wandering minstrel, to introduce myself into his house ; and then I counted on my affectionate cares, and on my cheering talk, and on my little songs, for soothing the sufferings and the irritation of Alberto's sire. Had I not relieved mine own father by means like those—and many a time? I obtained—no matter how—a male disguise, and though trembling occasionally at my own audacity, yet never repenting my purpose, I left my home—left Milan, as the gates were opened at earliest morning, and took the road to the lake. To avoid observation, I pursued the least frequented path, and stayed and concealed myself behind trees and bushes whenever I heard or saw any travellers approaching ; for I was well informed of the dangerous state of the country, overrun by bands of German soldiery and Italian partisans, and dreaded, as I did death, the being interrupted in my progress to Como. When there, I should have difficulties to surmount ; but against those I had prepared

myself. In this furtive manner, which was not exactly consistent with speed, I at length arrived at a narrow dell, which, descending through a chain of hills, opened on the lake. I now saw the city of Como on the water's edge, just opposite to me, and a small village and boats close at hand. I was quickening my pace to engage one of these boats to waft me across the lake, when a strange, coarse exclamation, which did not come from an Italian mouth, and, presently after, the robust arm of a warrior, arrested my steps. I was near to faint when I saw that this man was a German, and discovered, in a cool grotto or recess to the right, and a little above the road through the quiet dell, a group of his countrymen, carousing, morning though it was, on the wines of Italy. There was no sense in my ears to the words that came from the soldier's mouth; but when he conducted me to the grotto, and I stood trembling and stupefied before the troop, there was one of them who spoke our own dialect: he was their captain or chief, and I took courage at the sight of his less ferocious countenance and gentler manners. He asked me who and what I was, and whither I was going. My fabricated tale of being an orphan youth, a musician, did impose on him; but he knew enough of Lombardy and our different local accents and phraseologies, to detect at once that I was a Milanese. As such he could well detain me as a prisoner, and it happened most appropriately that he had just lost his favourite page. I should supply his place. I had been sent on purpose. My entreaties were in vain; and from that unluckily moment to this I have been Count Arnolph's page! The imperious necessity of preserving my secret—the horrid consequences of a discovery being ever present to my mind—the rapid changes in my complexion also aiding me somewhat—I have been able to wear this page's garb for more than a twelvemonth; and though a thousand times nearly discovered by some accident or other, have escaped till now. But, my friends, you know not what it has cost me!"

The young narrator was silent for some moments, and seemed agitated by deep and most serious feelings; but, recovering herself, she asked, in truly feminine character, whether her cheek would ever again be restored to its former fairness, and whether her young brow had not contracted furrows—deep wrinkles—from her

constant anxiety and ponderings. "I had hoped at first," said Marietta, continuing her narrative, "that Count Arnolph and his troop might be repairing to Como. In that case, I might have escaped, and seen him whom I had gone to see and to assist. But, no! the Count crossed the lake in a different direction, and marched into Chiavenna, where we waited the arrival of the fresh army from Germany. When the Imperialists came on in their might, I was struck with many things, but I despaired of the liberties of Lombardy. As the arms and armour of the Northern chivalry gleamed through the passes of the Alps,—as squadron of horse succeeded squadron,—as the pennons and standards of princes, and archbishops, and bishops, and all the magnates of Germany, seemed to flaunt the air before me, and to menace Italy at my feet, I asked myself, what have the industrious citizens of Milan to oppose to these?—and I trembled for my brother,—my father, my Alberto. Count Arnolph, my master, went not with the Archbishop of Magdebourg and the other great personages of the empire, who repaired to meet Frederic Barbarossa at Como. He slowly marched forward with the mass of the army, and I was kept constantly near his person. In this manner did I, from the Imperial camp, witness the fight of Legnano, and the triumph of my gallant countrymen. From that decisive field Count Arnolph, with the poor remnant of his followers, retreated at once across the Alps, and carried me with him to his gloomy castle, in a gloomy wood, in the most central and gloomy part of all Germany. There I learned to hunt the wild boar,—to drink a strange, bitter beverage, they call beer,—to speak their uncouth tongue,—to sing German romances of interminable length, and to swear an oath like a page; for, the more sedentary became our mode of life, the more was it necessary to thicken all the colours of my mask. It was told to me on my arrival, by a white-bearded serving-man, who seemed as old as its walls, that the Count's castle was much frequented by ghosts and other spirits; but the only apparitions I ever saw were my distant friends, whom, at times, I feared I should see no more in reality. Yes! Rodoaldo! there you would all come; and on the long, long winter nights, and in those gloomy corridors and vast chambers, I

have seen, not only with my sleeping but my waking eyes, dusky forms, or shadows of forms, glide before me, which my memory and affections converted into the semblances of those I love. When spring came, after a long, dreary winter, my desponding heart revived ; but the news that Count Arnolph was preparing his return to Italy to join the Emperor, had more effect on my spirits than the vernal flowers and breezes. At length the journey was commenced, and, riding in the Count's train, I traversed Germany, and again looked down from the ridges of the Alps on my own dear Italy. This morning only I arrived with the Count at this wondrous city in the midst of the waters, and was devising the mode of escape, or of communicating with Milan, when my delighted eyes fell upon you, my brother—and upon you, Alberto !”

When the heroic girl had finished the narrative of her remarkable adventures, the friends repaired at once to Count Arnolph ; and after some explanations, which still left him in happy ignorance as to the real history and condition of his Lombard page, they procured her manumission. In the position of affairs, the noble German could not indeed refuse the cession of a Milanese prisoner ; yet he did not cede his graceful, his gentle page, to whom he had become accustomed, without a pang. Had he known the whole truth—the sex and loveliness of her who had been so long his companion in the field, on the road, in the solitary castle, and whom he had now given up—how much more violent might have been his feelings !

The friends, after having finished all their business, and witnessed all the festivals that were given in honour of the general reconciliation of Italy, left Venice for Milan, where Marietta, whose recovery had been kindly announced by letter, was expected with passionate impatience. We will not paint the joy of the arrival, or of the marriage day, which soon followed ; but finish our tale by saying, that, about a year after the latter auspicious period, when Marietta, with a lovely infant in her arms, undertook another journey to Como, and to the roof of her husband's still inveterate father, she was more successful than on the former occasion ; and that the old man withdrew his curse, received them to his heart, and blessed them ere he died.

## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### *Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.*

#### FROM THE PEACE OF CONSTANCE, TO THE RENEWAL OF THE LOMBARD LEAGUE.

1185.—THE Milanese introduced some changes in their political constitution; and the first jealousies between the nobles and the people declared themselves. Similar changes and dissensions, which prepared the way for others of much greater moment, occurred in Bologna, and other of the free and republican cities. The general revolutions of the empire, on which Italy for the greater part still depended, quieted, for several years, this fermentation; but it was developed again, and with terrific force, when the Emperors and the Popes, at war with each other, claimed, in all the Italian towns, the support of the factions they fomented.

1191.—War between the Lombard cities of Brescia and Cremona, and the *male morto*, or sanguinary victory of the Brescians over the Cremonese and their allies.

1198.—War between Parma and Piacenza.

First establishment of the House of Romano in the Trevisan march.

1200.—Civil war at Brescia between the nobles and the people.

1204.—Constantinople was taken by the French and the Venetians under the brave, blind old Dandolo. But for the wealth and other means of the Republic of Venice, whose progress had been rapid during the ages we have made no mention of her, this crusade, which ended so brilliantly in the capture of the capital of the Eastern Empire, never could have been undertaken; and in the operations of the siege, Venetian dexterity and ingenuity were more conspicuous, or more useful, than French valour and chivalry.

The Inquisition, which was afterwards much altered, and always varied in Spain from what it was in Italy, was first established at Rome by Pope Innocent the Third. It was under the Pontificate of this able and ambitious Pope a Roman, and a noble by birth, a saint in reputation, and only thirty-eight

years of age, that the power of the Church of Rome was exalted to a most eminent degree. And yet, it must be observed, the extension of that ecclesiastical power, which was to end in a tyranny more oppressive and debasing than that of the Emperors', and to be so frequently the cause of foreign interference in the affairs of Italy, was, in the beginning, most favourable to the liberties of that country. The banners of Independence were tendered by Innocent III. not only to the Tuscan cities in subjection to the Empire, as remarked by M. Sismondi, but to other small states or cities; and it must be acknowledged that the national cause, or the cause that might have produced one general spirit and an Italian nation was benefited by the exertions of the Roman Pontiff.

1218.—Frederic II. succeeded to the empire; but the Pope, Honorius III., who persevered in the ambitious plans of Innocent III., would not confirm his election, until he engaged forthwith to carry his arms into the Holy Land, and to cede to the Church certain territories she coveted on the confines of the Neapolitan kingdom.

1223.—Frederic II. transported the rebellious Saracens of Sicily to Luceria, a town in the plains of Apulia. Twenty-four years later he established another colony of Saracens at Nocera, a pleasant town between Naples and Salerno, which from that period has preserved the name of Nocera de' Pagani. Favourable conditions were granted to these Mahometans on their taking an oath of fidelity, and both Frederic and his successors were much indebted to their aid in the field. It will be seen afterwards how the Church of Rome and his other enemies turned this circumstance against King Manfred, calling him Sultan and Pagan, &c.

1224.—The Emperor Frederic established a university at Naples, inviting the most learned professors from other parts of Italy, and particularly from the doctissima Bologna, which had a university as early as A.D. 1080.

1227.—The Pope excommunicated the Emperor because he had not departed for the crusade at the time fixed, which he had been prevented from doing by sickness.

1228.—Frederic went to Palestine, pursued by the maledictions of the Pope.

1229.—He obtained from the Sultan of Egypt an advantageous peace, and the restitution of the city of Jerusalem; and then, returning to Italy, dissipated the crusades which the Pope had armed against him.

1330.—The league of the Lombard cities, which had been renewed, at the instances of the Pope, against the Emperor, four years before, was now recognised and included in a treaty of peace between the Emperor and the Pope. A unanimity of political sentiment never existed, however, in the whole extent of Lombardy; for, opposed to the Guelfic league, at whose head was Milan, a Ghibelline league was formed, in which the Republics of Parma, Cremona,



and Modena, were conspicuous ; and these partisans of the Pope or the Emperor hated each other with a cordial hatred, and were always ready to neglect the cause of Lombard liberty in their own dissensions.

For the protection of the Church, the Lombard League paid a dear and a dishonouring price ; for each of the cities contracted to publish and enforce against the heretics the sanguinary edicts of the Popes. On the 13th January, 1228, the Assembly of Milan pronounced a sentence of exile and of confiscation of property against the heretics. In 1231, a still severer edict was published ; and two years after, for the march of fanaticism is rapid, penal fires were lighted for the first time at Milan ; and the Podestà of the day placed in the façade of a public palace an inscription in his honour, to convey to posterity that he was the first in Milan to burn heretics.



## The Nun and the Crusader.



Beatrice mi guardò con gli occhi pieni  
Di faville d'amor, con sì divini,  
Che vinta mia virtù diede le reni,  
E quasi mi perdei con gli occhi chini.

DANTE.

\* \* \* E'l cantar che rell' anima si sente.

PETRARCA

## THE NUN AND THE CRUSADER.

HARK! Vespers have commenced in the monastery of St. Christina! We are near; let us thither and hear the sweet singing of the nuns!" said a young nobleman of Bologna to his companion.

"I would we went rather to the Church of St. Clare!" said the other, carelessly. "It is cooler there, and this is a sultry evening."

"But the music is not so good, and it is much farther to go," said the first speaker; "the service may be over before we arrive at St. Clare's; so prithee follow my guidance for once, and let us hear vespers where we are;" and, taking his half-reluctant comrade by the arm, the young nobleman walked up to the door of the church attached to the monastery, whose threshold was not again to be crossed by one of them with so light and indifferent a heart, and entered the place of worship, which was already crowded by the devout.

Indifference to religion (would that the religion of the middle ages had been better and purer in itself!) was not among the vices of those times; and though the young Bolognese had entered the church with careless minds, or occupied with the worldly affairs and the pleasures of the day, they were very soon warmed to devotion by the beautiful music they heard. There were no instruments, but a chorus of female voices left nothing to desire in harmony, sweetness, and touching simplicity. As the melodious anthem to the Virgin floated through the church, its Gothic architecture—(a style introduced into Italy about this period)—its lengthening aisles, clustering pillars, and arched roof, at times prolonged the cadences of the sacred song, and, at others, seemed to condense its notes into one powerful, animating burst of music. But of a sudden the choir ceased, and the voice of one young nun continued the service. Never was anything more exquisite than

this voice and this *sola*. There was a delicacy and tenuity in them—a deep, penetrating sweetness, that flooded the inmost soul of all within the church with sentiments that, though allied to devotion, were languid and luxurious. Every eye was raised to the gallery high above head, where the nun sang like a little bird in the clouds; but no eye with more searching curiosity and emotion than that of Ottaviano, one of the young Bolognese noblemen, and he of the two, as if by some secret presentiment of what was to befall him, who had gone into St. Christina's rather reluctantly.

"Are those tones mortal?—was there ever music like to this?" were the words he whispered to his companion, as he sought along the gallery the spot whence the *sola* proceeded. But he did not speak again when he had found out the person of the young nun, who was seated apart from the rest, at an open window, and when he saw a face as angelic, at least, as the music that so enraptured him; and his eye became as motionless as his tongue, for he gazed up at that window as if attracted by something more powerful than mortal spell or fascination. An oval face of the most perfect form,—a complexion purely pale, as if (which was almost the fact, for the young Lucia had been brought up from her infancy within the walls of the monastery) nor wind, nor sun, had ever played upon it; eyes of oriental size and blackness, looking the blacker from her pallid hue, and up-raised to Heaven as she sang with all her soul; a mouth that would suit a cherub, and sweet as the sounds that warbled from it; a long, lithe, transparent neck and throat, along which her tones were seen to flow like a stream—a continuous stream of melody; an air of extreme youthfulness, and loveliness, and holy simplicity, were the principal of the charms that captivated, at first sight, the susceptible heart of Ottaviano. When the singing of the young nun had ceased, she drew her long, black robe and veil about her, and retired from the open window to another part of the gallery. The eyes of Ottaviano were still fixed on her, and he could not be said to see any other object until vespers were finished, and

Lucia, with the rest of the nuns, withdrew from the church to the monastery. The two friends then walked from St. Christina's into the streets of Bologna; Ottaviano enduring, in witless silence, the taunts of his less susceptible companion, and dwelling, with passionate and dangerous *fixity*, on the lovely face, the melting eyes, the soul-ravishing music of the voice of the young recluse. Incipient love is most unsociable—old and dear friendships give way in such moments to the all-monopolizing influences of a passion whose very nature it is, like the snake of Aaron, to swallow up all the rest. Ottaviano wished to be alone, to gloat uninterruptedly over the one image that filled his imagination, and he left his friend without acknowledging by a syllable the impression made on him by the hearing of vespers at St. Christina's—which he certainly would not have heard, had it not been for that friend.

The night that followed these vespers was a sleepless one for the passionate, enthusiastic Bolognese. Turn him as he would, the delicate face and form of the nun were before him, with grace and loveliness that might drive to madness; and when he shut his eyes and tried to rest, those languishing eastern eyes of hers peered full in his, dispelling sleep, and penetrating into the deepest recesses of his heart. Ottaviano had been in love before; for in the genial climate of Italy men do not generally attain his age, of twenty, as strangers to the gentle passion; but the restlessness and impetuosity of former amorous attacks were repose and coldness compared to what he now felt.

Long before "jocund day" stood on the fair hills of Bologna, or the carol of the lark had succeeded the lay of the nightingale, Ottaviano was standing under the gloomy walls of the monastery of St. Christina; and soon as the church-door opened for matins, there was he in the aisle, standing opposite the little gallery, and waiting with beating heart, to see whether the lovely nun would be again visible or not. And she came, and she placed herself at the same open place as on the eve of yesterday, when she first captured his soul with heavenly music; and she blessed his eyes with a vision of beauty, more exquisite still than that which had never quitted his imagination since the moment of his first seeing her.

The young nun, who had just risen from her fragrant, peaceful couch, was indeed surpassingly lovely. Her face and brow, from which the coal-black veil was parted, looked paler and purer in the cool light of morning dawn, than they had done in the golden atmosphere of evening; her eyes were blacker and more liquid still, and seemed swimming with the essences of youth, of beauty, of love, or of devotion, which at certain periods, and in certain persons, does so much resemble love. As her charms beamed on the fixed eyes of Ottaviano, he could have fallen on his knees, even there in the house of God, and worshipped her as something superior to earth's daughters; and so passionate and sexually imaginative was this young man, that his breathing came thick, his sight was troubled, his head was giddy, as he looked up to the gallery and caught at last a glance meeting his. So great was his emotion that he clung for support to one of the pillars of the aisle.

When he again raised his eyes to the window, the young nun was gone; but the next instant her voice, which was to be henceforward the music of his soul, and never, never forgotten, struck sweetly on his ear, as she sang a prelude to the matins. Heart, soul, every feeling of his nature, was then transferred to Ottaviano's ears, until the notes of that silvery voice were confounded and lost in the general choir of the holy sisterhood. As the matins finished, the fair Lucia again appeared at the front of the gallery; she stayed there all the time of the mass, though to him it seemed only for a moment; and her disappearance with the nuns, who returned to their cells, was to the lover in the church, as though the sun had left the hemisphere. Coldness, and darkness, and night fell upon his heart, and he went away immeasurably deep in love, with only one wish in his mind,—for the arrival of the moment when his eyes and ears might be again feasted by the young nun. Even in the first ebullition of his passion, Ottaviano had felt how hopeless it was; but he did not feel how sinful too—to love a nun, a virgin-bride of Heaven, until several days after. When that conviction broke upon his mind, which was tempered with all the religious notions of the times;—when he felt that the passion he cherished was impious, was sacrilegious;—

when he saw himself advancing to be the rival of his God ;—when he groaned under the consciousness of the guilt of loving the spouse of Christ, he smote his reproachful heart,—he wished that fate had never led him within the walls of the Church of St. Christina, and to the sight of such resistless charms ; but for all this he did not love the less. Indeed, it might be on the contrary, that his passion was increased by its very despair and its sinfulness, which by necessitating silence and secrecy, left the impetuous youth to brood over it alone, and to experience what most men have experienced, the dangerous seductions of mystery and concealment.

Day after day, at evening as at morning service, did Ottaviano repair to St. Christina's, and to his post in the aisle, opposite to the little window of the fair Lucia, where he gazed, and listened, and sighed his soul away—his enamoured soul ! And while the youth in the church aisle was so agitated, did the maid in the gallery never detect him ? Was her heart unmoved the while ?

Alas, no ! she had caught the penetrating, dangerous glances of Ottaviano's eyes, and her tranquil nature had undergone a change, of which, in her youthfulness and perfect innocence, she had no previous notion. The first time she saw him gazing intently at her from the crowded aisle, she felt that she had never been so looked at before ; but her innocent little heart was noways troubled, and perhaps she scarcely recalled the circumstance, until she again saw the handsome young man looking upwards more eagerly than before, and as if he would follow the glances of his eyes, and fly to the gallery where she stood. She might not be aware of it, but then a slight blush went tremulously over her fair, pale cheek and brow. The next day, and Ottaviano was again there, in the self-same spot, with the same expression of countenance, and looking as if he had never quitted the aisle, but had been gazing on at the gallery ever since she saw him last. This time her eyes, as they were caught by his, could not detach themselves so speedily as they had done before : they were fixed by his ardent glances ; and she received, through the medium of that fascination, a portion of Ottaviano's soul, or the passions that agitated it. And even when she did withdraw those eyes, she could keep them neither on the

music scroll before her, nor upwards on the blue vault of heaven, on which they were wont to repose in fervent devotion : in a moment they reverted to the mundane form below, and there they rested, fixed and motionless, on his. Meanwhile, her blood ran quicker through her blue veins, and the blush that mantled on her cheek was reflected even in her eyes. When the service was over and the nuns departed from the gallery to regain the solitude of their cells, she was the last to go ; and as she went her eyes lingered on the figure of him, who seemed to see no object on earth save herself. She sighed when she could no longer see him, and in the course of the day she frequently *wished* for the “Ave Maria,” and the hour of vespers. But not many more days had passed when those wishes, at first almost involuntary and scarcely assigned to any cause, became impatient longings and tyrannical desires. Her feet would hurry when the summons, that found her long prepared, was given to go to the church. Her breath would gather thick round her heart, if, on reaching the open part of the gallery, she saw Ottaviano was not in the aisle ; and that heart would overflow with rapture when he came and took his post opposite to her, and looked into her eyes. She could no longer keep from gazing at him ; and whether she sang alone, or joined her silvery voice to the choir, or listened to the prayers of the priest—nay, even at the elevation of the most holy mass—the languorous glances of her coal-black eye would ever and anon seek out Ottaviano. Yes ! Lucia, the young, the lovely nun of Bologna, felt the mysterious influences and sympathies of love, though as yet her innocent mind did not acknowledge them as such, or rather did not know the character of her own feelings. She was awakened to this consciousness, as if by a thunderbolt. One of the nuns of St. Christina, who had not been brought up in the seclusion of a monastery, but had lived in the world, and had loved, saw some of Lucia’s glances and the object that attracted them. She watched them both during one morning’s mass ; and much less penetration than hers would have sufficed to discover the fact, that they were both in love. Though blasted affections and hopes had driven this nun to a monastery, no vows of de-



votion, and no ascetic mode of life, and no fanaticism could obliterate the recollections of former days, when her soul beamed in her eyes, and, like the young creature by her side, she could live on the glances of one beloved object. She felt the enormity, the sacrilegiousness, as it was then considered, of a virgin of God loving a mortal, sinful man. She considered that her own salvation would be perilled if she did not rush to save a falling sister from such an abyss of guilt, and to expel the illusions of human passion from her young heart; but all this she determined to attempt by gentle, affectionate means.

When she took the simple, pure-hearted Lucia apart in the garden of the monastery, and entered with delicacy, but with all a woman's tact—the tact of a woman who has lived in the world, and experienced in herself, and watched in others, the progress of human feelings and affections; when she withdrew the veil of beauty and glory that concealed from the young nun her true position; when she made her understand the import of the words pronounced by the holy Bishop who had given her the veil, “Let this separate your eyes for ever from the eyes of men;” when, in brief, she had shown Lucia what love was, and what was the extent of her love, and how perilously she sinned against Heaven in so loving, the astounded girl fell into her arms, and with her dove-like bosom beating wildly, and her eyes streaming with tears, supplicated, prayed, with trembling accents, that sister Orsola, the kind and the good, would protect her from sin, from the irresistible eyes of the youth in the aisle, and from herself.

The morning that followed this explanation, and at early mass, the ardent Ottaviano was in the church, and at his wonted post; but the open window in the gallery, through which he had taken such draughts of love, was most jealously closed. He looked on the dark shutter, expecting it to open; but, during the whole long service, for it was a “*missa cantata*” in honour of a festival of the Madonna, it opened not; and, though he heard the angel tones of her voice, he went heavily away from the church, without having seen Lucia. For many days he had seen her twice each day: to see her—to fix his eyes upon her young charms, and sigh beneath

her gallery window, had become the sole objects of his life ; he had no other motive or desire ; and all the places in the world except the monastery and the church of St. Christina, were indifferent to him. The intervals of other pursuits ; the pauses allowed by ambition, or the search after wealth, may be filled up by other occupations and pleasures, and extraneous objects ; but the time between the "seeing her, and the moment of seeing her again," is, to a young and passionate lover, during the first impulses of his passion, like Ottaviano, an utter void, a desolate, and heart-desolating void ! The Bolognese had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to care about, but when his eyes should be again blessed by the sight of the young nun ; and no objects of reflection, save her charms, and the unwelcome chances which had that morning deprived him of the sight of them. But when the Ave Maria, the hour of prayer and of love arrived ; when he stood again at his post, and saw the gallery window still closed, and no Lucia appearing, a conviction, chiller to his soul than the ice of Caucasus, a certainty that there was something more than chance in this, possessed and racked him. He gazed on the closed window as though he would have forced it open with his glances ; but it remained closed, and Lucia appeared not. Though deprived of the pleasures of sight, he could still however delight the sense of hearing, for the voice of his young nun was distinct in the choir from all the rest ; and he remained as formerly, but with his arms crossed more sadly on his breast, until the evening service was finished and the church cleared ; and then he only removed to the distance of a contiguous hill, where, from a little wood of rustling pines, he could fix his moody eyes on the walls of the monastery and the church. The next morning saw Ottaviano with a face almost as pale as the white stone crucifixes that formed an avenue to the church, standing beside the church door, impatiently waiting until it should open. As the good people in the neighbourhood of St. Christina's repaired to their matins in the grey, cool dawn, and saw the young nobleman there so early, and with a countenance so subdued, they could not help applauding the warmth and sincerity of his devotion.

The massy door of the temple at length revolved on its hinges, the people flocked in, and Ottaviano was once more stationed in the aisle, but so weak from want of nourishment and sleep, that he was obliged to lean all the while against the Gothic pillar. The gallery window was still closed, he only heard Lucia's voice ; he would have given treasures to see her face, her lovely, pale, touching face ; but he was never to see it again ; and day after day that he repaired to the Church of St. Christina at matins and at vespers, though he dragged a consuming fever with him, he could only hear her sing. Still, this was something to an impassioned and imaginative lover like himself ; to catch the tones of that unseen chantress, which could so well recall the looks that had won him ; to hear her voice float on the air, as sweet, and as mysterious-like, from her grated concealment, as the hymning of invisible angels at still and dark midnight ; and to feel, while his sense of hearing proved she was there, that he was breathing the same atmosphere with her, was within a short distance of her still, this was pleasure !

But when, as happened after the lapse of somewhat more than a month from the time of the intrusion of the ividious shutter, he was deprived of that pleasure, and could no longer catch the sound of Lucia's voice, Ottaviano became desperate, and prepared for any extreme measure that might present itself. One morning, as he returned into the busy part of the city of Bologna from St. Christina's, where he now listened as vainly as he had gazed, and whither despair told him never to return, his absent, distracted attention was claimed by a torrent of people that pressed towards the *duomo* or cathedral church, and having some indistinct notion of what attracted them, he followed their steps.

In these days, which were somewhere in the year of our redemption one thousand one hundred and ninety-two, the city of Bologna was governed by its own bishop and the people's choice, the wise and moderate Gerardo de Scannabecchi. This virtuous prætor or podestà, had authorized an eloquent missionary in favour of crusade, to preach in the cathedral, and to give the cross to as many in the city and territory of Bologna, as might be

induced to invest it. The whole of Christendom was then in consternation at the recent events in the Holy Land, where the infidels had taken Jerusalem, the city of our Lord ; and an appeal to the generous-hearted and the brave, to Christians of every class and of every country, was incessantly made by the Roman pontiffs, and the untiring ministers of the church of Rome, through every degree of the hierarchy, from the mitred priest to the bare-foot mendicant friar. Few, however, of the missionaries of the crusade possessed the moving eloquence of him to whom Ottaviano now listened in the cathedral of Bologna. The cries which arose when Peter the Hermit first preached to a devout, a fanatic, and martial people, were repeated by the Bolognese ; and Ottaviano's " *Deus vult*" was louder, and every way more energetic, than any other voice in the vast church. It surprised him that it should not have occurred to him before, as the only remedy for his helpless love, to go to Palestine ; to consecrate himself to Heaven, as his beloved Lucia was consecrated, and by a vow as solemn as hers when she took the veil, to detach himself for ever from the world ; but now he made that vow with all the ardour of an enthusiastic nature ; and receiving from the missionary the cross, the sacred symbol, that, worn on his arm, marked him as the soldier of Christ, he prepared at once to depart from his friends and home, and the beautiful land of his birth.

If the Italians generally were addicted to those extraordinary migrations which seemed to throw (as if in reverse to the supposed original course of population) the people of Europe upon Asia ; if every part of the Peninsula sent its men-at-arms and its serfs to the crusades, the rising Republics of Genoa and Venice were more particularly awake to the call. But commerce had more to do than religion had in this prompt assumption of the cross, or ready offer of ships and modes of conveyance. The trading republicans hired their galleys and other vessels to the non-maritime nations ; they opened commercial communications, and trafficked most advantageously in silks and other commodities, the produce of Eastern soil or of Eastern ingenuity ; and whilst other people were impoverishing themselves in the Holy War, they daily

acquired wealth, and laid the foundation of that power they afterwards acquired in the Levant, and of that taste and magnificence which for so many centuries rendered Genoa and Venice paramount in Europe. It was at the latter of these two cities that Ottaviano embarked, with many other *croce-segnati*. The evening that the vessels slipped away from the canals and the hundred islets of Venice, like a group of stately swans, was mild and soothing, and accorded admirably with the quiet, melancholy mood of mind into which the Bolognese lover had subsided. The chime\* of the Ave Maria, which, in former hours, he had so often heard with thrilling pleasure from the towers of the monastery of St. Christina, broke on the stillness of evening, as the fleet spread all their white sails to the breeze; and, while it touched his heart to the quick, recalled all the friends and the scenes of his native land he was leaving, and he felt it was for ever, and her, the young nun, whom he had loved, whom he still loved, so unwisely, but so dearly! He leaned over the side of his vessel, whose speed was now increasing under a freshening breeze, and let more than one tear fall into the white foam that was heaved and lashed around him.

The charms with which poetry and romance have invested the age of the crusades, have perhaps slight foundations in reality; and dispassionate history has painted the period as one of gross ignorance, debasing superstition, theft, violence, and the most disgusting licentiousness. Such were, no doubt, the characters of the many who flocked to Palestine in the train of the goose or the goat; but there remained the few, the gentler spirits, superior to the barbarous age in which they lived, who might, in justice, maintain the places they have occupied in poetry, and in our youthful imaginations; and philosophy, and criticism, and the cold acumen of years and experience, will never wholly deprive of their charms the crusades and the Holy Land, with their gallant knights and faithful squires, their loves at home weeping in solitary bower, and, now and then, their Eastern maidens,

whose gazelle eyes and passionate hearts might cause their paganism to be forgotten !

Some of these gentler spirits from the more refined Italian States there were on board of the Venetian galley which conveyed Ottaviano on his "watery way ;" and one of them, to wile away the time, was singing this appropriate romance :—

Bearing the holy cross upon her breast,  
Fair Fiorina left her royal home,  
To wander like a pilgrim, with her best,  
Her only love ; and by his side to roam  
To Palestine. In helm and hauberk drest,  
She fought and fell with him : one common doom  
Was theirs ; and now, their task of glory o'er,  
They rest together on that holy shore.

'Twas an Autumnal morn serene and bright,  
The last that glitter'd on the warrior's casque.  
" Ah ! do not, Fiorina, seek the fight  
To-day !" her Sveno said ; " for stern the task  
And fierce will be the strife—in heaven's pure light,  
And not 'neath battle's clouds that head should bask."  
She heard, but heeded not. She hears no more :  
They rest together on that holy shore.

Where fiercest raged the battle, there they find  
The bodies of that sainted pair ; their hands  
Around each other's necks were closely twined,  
And now each blessed soul adoring stands  
Before their Maker's living throne, assign'd  
A glorious station 'mid the Heavenly bands :  
Their bodies feel life's pelting storms no more,  
But rest together on that holy shore.

" In good sooth ! it would be sweet so to die, and find such rest at last !" mused Ottaviano, making an application of the romance to his own life and circumstances. " But it will be my fate to sleep for ever in the Holy Land, whilst Lucia, my beloved, will rest far away from me, in the sepulchral vaults of St Christina's" Such however was not his fate,—at least, it is not so recorded ;—and whilst we relate the remainder of the young Crusader's adventures, as preserved by a serious historian of Bologna,\* we must claim indulgence for the superstitions and the

legendary extravagance of the times, and leave it to the ingenuity of our reader to separate fiction from truth.

Ottaviano, after a long, and sometimes a dangerous voyage, reached the rocky shores of Palestine, and traversing the regions to which, poor and sterile as they frequently are, the records of the books of our faith lend such ineffable splendour, and treading in the footsteps of prophets, saints, and the apostles of our Lord, nay, even where the Lord himself had trod, where, in His mercy, He invested the humble form and likeness of humanity—our heart-stricken Bolognese soon joined some considerable forces of Christians, who, despite of the discouragement occasioned by the death of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, prosecuted the war against the Infidels. That great monarch, whose ambition and reverses we have had occasion to allude to in the preceding narrative, headed a powerful crusade, twelve years after the battle of Legnano, where Liberty and the Lombard Republics had so triumphed over his arms; and, after having shed so much Christian blood in Italy, he might hope, according to the notions then prevalent, to atone for it by shedding more Saracen blood in the Holy Land. Ninety thousand men followed the Suabian's banners; and Frederic had consulted the qualities of his followers as soldiers, rather than pilgrims:—of this formidable army, thirty thousand were horse, a number that included the noblest knights of Germany and Italy. He had safely traversed Hungary and Bulgaria, defeated the intrigues of the jealous Greeks; and, after wintering in Thrace, had crossed with all his forces into Asia by the straits of the Dardanelles, in the spring of one thousand one hundred and ninety. The Pagans were worsted, and the Sultan of Iconium saw his capital burnt by the crusaders. Thence the Christian host marched into Armenia, where they found friends and allies in a Christian and a very devout population; but whilst the aged Emperor was looking confidently forward to the conquest of vast regions watered by mighty rivers,—the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Orontes,—he had been drowned in a paltry stream called Salef, whose icy waters are supposed to have produced apoplexy, just three years before the arrival of Ottaviano in the Holy Land.

Our still passionately enamoured and despairing Bolognese was anxious for combat where he rather hoped for death than cared for victory. The changes of scene, the impressive scenes he was now daily amidst, the activity and adventurousness of his life, the applause of admiring friends, the prospects of ambition that were held out to him—prospects in which, from a red-cross knight, he with many of his fellows, might become a king and wield the sceptre over the rich provinces their swords had won, estranging distance and obliterating time, had no effect on Ottaviano's love for the young nun, the beautiful Lucia! Go where he would, her pale face and lovely languishing eyes were present to him; and, though his religious conscience was not silent of reproaches, it would constantly happen that her inebriating image would rise before him at the most holy moments, and in the most holy places. Indeed, the very offices of his religion, which should calm worldly passions and appetites, served to irritate his; for, where had he seen Lucia but in the temple of his God?—and he could not enter a church, nor lean against a column in the aisle, nor look above to the gallery, nor hear a hymn, a mass, a matin, or a vesper, without thinking of St. Christina's and its recluse.

But the warfare and the field he so ardently desired were not long delayed. The city of Tyre, so rich in recollections of ancient splendour, and commerce, arts, and literature, so important as a maritime possession to the crusaders, had been saved from the impetuous attack of Saladin by the young and gallant Conrade Marquis of Montferrat, at the head of the Christian forces, composed principally of subjects of the energetic Italian republics of Pisa and Genoa:\* but Tyre was again threatened; and in an expedition destined for its relief, Ottaviano came suddenly, and for the first time, in presence of the enemy. With a shout of joy, such as an Indian fanatic may utter when he exultingly throws himself under the ponderous wheels of his idol Juggernaut, sure of being ground to a powder, did the Bolognese rush on the spears of the Mussulmans, equally confident of being transpierced.



After dealing the blow of death on more than one turbaned head, he was hurled from his horse by a lance, that was not merciful enough to kill him, and left bleeding and motionless on the field of battle, which his comrades were at length obliged to abandon on account of their great disproportion in number to their foe. When he recovered his senses, he found himself a prisoner in the hands of the Mahometans. The Pagan Emir, to whose lot Ottaviano fell, not content with making the hapless young man *his* slave, insisted on making him the slave of sin—a renegado to his Christian faith. When the seductions of promises the most brilliant, the offer of his own fair daughter's hand, were exhausted without producing any effect on the captive, the Emir had recourse to ill-treatment, to constant insult, and finally to torture, which was borne with a spirit worthy of a martyr's crown! But the firmest may be bent, the boldest of heart may doubt the strength of the body to bear; and, one day that the unfortunate Ottaviano lay under the hands of Nubian slaves, black and cruel as fiends,—at a moment when he felt his spirit giving way to the weakness of humanity, and the excruciating torments he was enduring, he raised his blood-shot eyes and prayed. “Oh! saint-like Virgin! Oh! chaste Lucia! if thou still livest sustain by thy prayers him who has so much loved thee! If thou art already in heaven, oh! implore for me the pity of my God, whom my soul will never abandon!”

Scarcely had he pronounced these devout words, when to the heat of the flame, and the searing iron,—to the puncture of the dagger point, the wrench of the wheel, and all the inflictions of torture,—he became at once insensible, and fell into a profound sweet sleep. When he awoke he was no longer in the “Paynim countrie,” but in Italy, in his native city: the Emir's chains hung heavily on his neck, his arms, his legs; but the Nubians had disappeared; and his own Lucia, resplendent with glory and beauty, stood over him, and pointed with one of her transparent hands to the Monastery of Saint Christina, whose walls were close to him. “Lucia!” cried the bewildered, enraptured lover; “my Lucia! is it thou! Dost thou still live?”

"I live ; but of the true life—the life which has no end !" said the dazzling vision. "Go ! and depose thy fetters there, on my tomb, and render thanks to God for the grace he has granted thee !" The phantom disappeared with these words, that were succeeded by the softest, the most exquisite music, which Ottaviano remembered to be the same as the vesper-hymn he had heard Lucia sing in the gallery of the church at the fatal moment of his first enamourment. But the notes were more tenuous than then, and soon died away, like the echo of a zephyr, in the blue heavens, high, high above the walls of the monastery.

On inquiry, it was ascertained that the young nun, who had the merit of attempting it, had not the strength to triumph over the love with which the youth in the aisle had inspired her. From the moment that the window in the gallery was closed and she saw him no more, her spirits and her health declined, and she had expired on the very day that her lover quitted Europe—perhaps at the very moment that, sailing from Venice, touched to the heart's inmost core by the Ave Maria, he wept over the past and his recollections of her.

Where Ottaviano, in obedience to his mistress's shade, deposed his chains,\* he himself was afterwards laid :—for, the severity of the monastic regulations being for once relaxed, a grave was opened near Lucia's, and the Crusader and the Nun slept side by side in the cemetery of Saint Christina.

\* It was said that not only were the chains of the Crusader seen on the tomb of the young nun, but that it was impossible to remove them thence. Cherubino Ghirardacci, the Bolognese historian, gives the authority of a monk for all this. "*E noi (dice Ambrogio Camaldulense) habbiamo veduti li detti ceppi, nè mancano testimoni, che affermano, che detti ceppi mai da quel luogo s'hanno potuto rimuovere.*"—Istoria di Bologna, l. iv.



## The Entranced.

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Ma dove, O lasso me ! dove restaro  
Le reliquie del corpo bello e casto ?

TASSO, *La Gerusalamme*, canto xii.

THE sun was sinking behind the dark blue hills of Friuli, and lengthening the shadows of Venice across the rippling waves of the Adriatic, when two Senators, who were taking their evening promenade on one of the quays, or outer terraces, which the industry of man had gained and secured from a formidable element, perceived a trim galley on the purple line of the horizon, pressing forward towards the city.

"That should be a vessel of the State," said one of the Signors ; "from whence may she be ?"

"Why not from Constantinople ?" replied his companion ; "it is time that some of that conquering expedition should be returned to the 'Winged Lion !'"

"Saint Mark, grant that it prove as you say !—But she keeps a gallant course, and will soon be here to speak for herself."

The two Senators, who, though both advanced in years, still glowed with that patriotic spirit which was destined to raise the low-sunk islets of Venice to such unprecedented glory, leaned against a parapet wall that ran along the edge of the terrace, fixing their earnest gaze upon the vessel, which, rapidly advancing, grew in magnitude to their eyes at every minute. She had been labouring on with all her long oars ; but now the sun had set, and

an evening breeze, a *vento di terra*, from the lofty mountains of Dalmatia, roughened the gulf. The sails, already set, were properly bent to catch the favouring wind, and another and another sail was hoisted, until the hulk seemed to bear the proportion to them that the body of the sea-fowl does to its widely-spreading and pure white wings. Nor could the flight of the gull or the albatross be well more rapid or direct than the sailing of the Venetian galley. She rushed like "a thing of life" over the darkening waves, and presently the white foam was seen curling, and the phosphoric light flashing before her impetuous bow. As she neared, the last gleams of day showed the proud banner of the Republic floating on her lofty stern.

"My Tebaldo—my son, my only one—fell a victim to the liquid and unextinguishable fire of the Greeks at the first siege of their heretical capital—but there are other fathers than me in Venice, and mothers who love their offspring, and wives who adore their absent husbands, and of a certainty for some of these there is great joy. The galley is the *Corriere* of the great Dandolo, the swiftest vessel of our fleets, and she comes, the har-binger of happiness to thousands. The rest will not be far behind."

The Senator who pronounced these words began in a subdued and melancholy tone; but his voice strengthened and his eye flashed as he continued, losing in the bliss of others, and in the contemplation of the glory of his country, the sense of his private and irremediable misfortune.

"Viva San Marco! Viva la Santa Chiesa!—and the Republic of Venice that has placed the keys of Saint Peter within the heretical walls of Constantinople!" exclaimed the other Senator.

"Viva San Marco and the Republic!" rejoined the childless man.

Their aged voices had scarcely ceased to vibrate, when a loud, continuous shout—a shout of transporting joy and triumph, rose from the deck and the rigging of the galley, and made itself heard, despite of distance, and the lash and roar of the waves that broke in foam at the feet of the two Senators. The next instant that

soul-stirring acclamation was answered by another shout, that absolutely smothered, while it lasted, the sounds of wind and wave ; and turning round, the Senators saw, on the edges of other terraces, and on the scattered islets that afforded the best points of observation, the mass of the population of Venice, gazing, like themselves, on the returning galley. In an instant, numerous barks were seen to glide from the *canali*, and dancing in fantastic groups over the heaving sea, to pull with strenuous oars towards the ship ; the patriotism, or the more private affections of many, not brooking the delay of a few minutes which would see her at anchor within Venice.

As she came on, with the breeze that still freshened, singing through her shrouds, a simultaneous display of countless blue lights was launched from her deck high into the heavens, where the crescent moon, with "a single star at her side," seemed to smile at these testimonials of joy, and to welcome the wanderers back again. The mimics of heaven's thunders, the pealing cannons, were not yet known ; but the roar of voices that again rose from the terraces, and the ship, and the boats mid-way between them, might almost equal the *rimbombo* of artillery, than which it was infinitely more replete with meaning, for the united voices of thousands distinctly syllabled the patriotic cry, which was still "Viva San Marco e la città di Venezia !"

There was silence for a while. The galley, now surrounded by the barks from the shore, glided round one of the islets which had intercepted the prospect, and presently the crew saw all the low houses of the town, with the clear, domestic lights gleaming from their lattices, full before them. The transport that then bounded in the hearts of the wanderers, the shout that then rose from the galley deck, must have been intense—

For what can consecrate the joys of home,  
Like one glad glance from ocean's troubled foam ?

The two Senators quitted the parapet, and repaired, with hasty steps, to the galley-quay, where they found many of their order, with most of the leading citizens, already assembled, and anxiously

awaiting to speak with the gallant commander of the *Corriere*. Soon the welcome vessel stood with her prow a few spans' length from the shore ; and anon, with rapid manœuvre, she swung round, and lay with her broadside against the edge of the quay. Another shout and cry of triumph and the Captain leaped on shore, and bowed before the senators and citizens of Venice.

"Thou art welcome, Sanuti," said the foremost of the company ; "thou art welcome as the confirmer of good tidings, but doubly welcome as a hero, who has honoured his Venetian blood by his deeds before the walls of Constantinople !"

The Captain bowed more lowly than before. "The *scampa-via* of Zani has then brought in safety our lord the Doge's despatches to the Senate of Venice?" inquired he, modestly.

"It has even done so much," replied the Senator ; "and we have long since learned that the winged lion is flying, for the second time over the walls of the capital of the East !"

"And long may it there fly !" cried Sanuti, "and may the sons of Venice 'plant the lion'—the standard of San Marco and the Republic, over many a conquest as fair as this !"

The assembled multitude echoed the words of the Captain, and the air was rent by shouts of "*Pianta leone !*" the popular war-cry, which was indeed destined to be heard on many a foreign shore.

"But, Sanuti," resumed the Senator who had already spoken, "what of the fleet ? A portion certainly should be at Venice ere this, were it but to lay the trophies in the temple of our Saint, under whom our arms have so prospered."

"I left the fleet to-day at noon ; they had gained the height of Cape Torella ; and only let this fair breeze blow till midnight, and we shall see them at the rising of to-morrow's sun."

This news spread with the swiftness of lightning through the multitude, and thence through the whole city ; and the childless Senator had predicted aright when he said "that for some there would be great joy in Venice on this night." There was, indeed, too much joy—and, alas ! in many instances, too much assured sorrow, or harrowing apprehension, to permit of sleep. The affectionate wife, with tears in her eyes, kissed the little slumberer in its

cradle, or assured the half-forgetful prattler on her knee that to-morrow he should see his father ; or with provident care she turned over the humble treasures of her coffers, to select fitting raiment for her long absent spouse ; or with diligent hands she prepared the restoring condiments, so welcome after the privations of a tedious sea-voyage ; or she sought the draughts for the wine-cup, which “maketh glad the heart of man.” The fond mother, whose son had gone to the East with the red-cross on his breast, rested not on her pillow, but gazing on the flickering lamp, asked a thousand times, “Oh ! will the light of to-morrow’s sun show me my boy in his strength and his beauty—or assure me that the light of life has for ever quitted his eyes !” The betrothed maiden, or she who had cherished a fond passion, paced her chamber floor with hurried steps ; or, gazing out of her casement on the sea-waves, sighed to the strong winds that agitated them, as love her young bosom—“And will he *come* with the morrow?—and will he love me as when he *went* ?”

That short summer night seemed of interminable length at Venice ; but the morrow came at last, and in the grey horizon, at the very point where the *Corriere* had first appeared on the preceding evening, a broad white sail was seen. A sail, and another, and another, rose to the eye from that sober, but brightening line, until the whole fleet was in view, and advanced, the orb of day rising in their rear, like a vast flock of wild swans, glancing their long white necks and buoyant white wings in the golden beams of morning. In the city, the matin summons to prayer sounded cheerfully on the ear, and in each Christian temple a song of thanksgiving succeeded the words of supplication. Our story is laid in very remote times ; but it was not until these religious duties were performed, that the people of Venice began their preparations for the triumphal reception of their home-wending heroes, or hastened to meet the objects of their hearts’ warm affections. But when, in their weakness and insufficiency, they had paid their due to Heaven, they entered on the business of life with zeal, and the city was agitated from one end to the other. Carpenters and other artisans were employed in laying stages for the warriors to

tread upon in their descent from the victorious galleys, or in erecting platforms whence the Venetian fair might wave their kerchiefs to the brave, or galleries whence the musicians might hail the return of those who had prevailed in the good fight, with the Lion and Saint Mark for their aid ! Women and children ran to gather the scanty supply of verdure and of flowers that the sea-girt city afforded ; but others were despatched to the mainland, to draw the laurel and the rose from the banks of the Brenta.

Inanimate nature seemed to partake in the joy and triumph of man ; and a bright, exhilarating sun, a gay blue sky, a sea serene, and a breeze as gentle as the sigh of happy love, were propitious to Venice and her day of rejoicing.

Meanwhile the fleet came on, spread out into the figure of a crescent. Every ship was distinctly visible through that fine, transparent atmosphere ; and as they glided over the placid waters towards their place of rest, the appropriate banner of each was clearly seen, and the impatient citizens on shore could tell the particular galley in which had sailed a son, a brother, or a friend. How many hearts beat at his recognition ! “ There is the Stella ! ” cried an old man ; “ my own brave boy commands there ! ” “ And there the Speranza ! ” cried another ; “ and, God be praised, my Francesco’s flag still floats on her masthead ! ” Exclamations like these, and eloquent outpourings of natural affection, were heard every moment to proceed from the congregated thousands ; whilst the speaking faces, the expressive Italian countenances there collected, offered to the eye a picture on which the artist might have dwelt with admiration and delight.

The fleet was now so near that the sounds of their warlike music were heard ; and every detail, to use the language of the painter, was distinctly made out. The bright and painted shields of the returning knights and squires were arranged on either side of the galleys : the warriors stood on the deck, in their armour of mail, with the silver-inlaid morion on their heads, and the burnished arms in their hands, the broad lance, the battle-axe, and the steel tipped mace, threw back the rays of the sun with dazzling brightness ; the “ winged lion,” the standard of the Republic, flew over



their heads; the bannerets of the patrician families of Venice floated on the elevated stern-quarter of the war-ships; whilst the principal galley, which had borne "the blind old Dandolo" to the scene of his glory, was distinguished by a vast white banner, on which was inscribed, in letters of gold, the new, the proud, "the singular, but accurate title,"\* "of lord of three-eighths of the Roman Empire," assumed by the conquering Doge, and afterwards retained by the Venetian Republic.†

The instruments of the musicians, of which only the more clangous, as the cymbal or the trumpet, had at first been heard, now were all mingled and audible; with each passing moment they waxed louder and louder, until they burst on the ear with an overpowering peal—an air of war and triumph, to which the voices of the warriors and the mariners formed an accompaniment. Then there rose to Heaven a shout from those on shore, that made Venice to ring through her hundred islets; and the cymbal and the harp, "the shrill trump, the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife," gave back a response to the galleys that, "gilded by the sun and reflected by the waters," now fast approached land.

On shore, as on the sea, the spectacle was imposing. Venice, indeed, was not yet the splendid city that claimed the world's admiration; she could not yet boast that accumulation of ancient and modern art which was afterwards to attract the stranger from many a distant land; but so early as this, or at the commencement of the thirteenth century, Venice was a city of importance—as remarkable as she ever could be, from her peculiar situation—even beautiful and stately, if compared with the cities, her contemporaries, in any other part of the world than Italy. The *Campanile*, or lofty tower of St. Mark, did not yet pierce the clouds, nor did the temple then offer to the observer's eye that striking mixture of Greek and Saracenic architecture, those long-extending rows of arches, that forest of columns, all of precious marble, those beau-

\* See Hallam's History of the Middle Ages, vol. i. chap. 3 part ii.

† The style of the Doges of Venice afterwards was, "Dominis quartæ partis et dimidiæ imperii Romani." And this remained unchanged till Giovanni Delfino, who was elected in 1356.

tiful mosaics, and that general richness and vastness, which resulted from after ages of commerce, wealth, and genius. But the bones of the blessed Apostle—of the Evangelist, whose name, says a Venetian historian, is associated with all the glories of the Republic—had reposed there ever since the eighth century; and the devotion of the Venetians had raised over these sacred relics an edifice really vast in dimensions, and not destitute of beauty. The obelisks of granite, and the elaborately sculptured pillars stood not yet in the piazza, or the piazzetta; the horses of bronze—those obsequious followers in the train of victory—those records of the mutability of fortune, stood not yet over the door of the temple, though they were soon to be there; for it was this returning fleet that brought them as a trophy from captured Constantinople. In fine, Egypt and Syria, Greece, and the Isles of Greece, had not yet been conquered and despoiled of their glorious remains to ornament the proud “Sea Cybele;” but, at the same time some objects of art and antiquity had been imported; some improvement from the study of them had been introduced in architecture and sculpture; and Italian genius, destined in after-centuries to rival that of Hellas, had begun to dawn, and Italian taste to show itself in the construction of their habitations, their churches, and public edifices.

It might be said, perhaps, that at the epoch of our tale Venice was about equi-distant from what she was at her humble origin—a collection of low huts scattered on the sea-lashed sand-banks and rocks, whose poor inhabitants Cassiodorus, the minister of Theodoric, compared to water-fowl, who had fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves,”—and what she became after the sixteenth century, when the wealth of the East had been poured in her lap, and the genius of Palladio and others had filled her with beauty.

But the moral picture offered to contemplation by Venice at that period was perhaps far more interesting and worthy of admiration. In Venice “the art and spirit of commercial industry” had revived, and was then extending its Briarean arms to every shore of the Mediterranean. On the perilous career of conquest she had entered with great *élan*; and, considering her origin and position, the in-

fluence she exercised on the politics of the South and East of Europe was astonishing. The banners of three subject nations did not yet float before St. Mark's ; but an Emperor had knelt there—a Pope had been the guest of the Republic, and his gratitude had invested Venice with the nuptial ring with which, on each succeeding year, she was to espouse the Adriatic—which she was to wear as the absolute mistress and sovereign of the seas.\*

The glorious dawn of liberty among the neighbours of Venice, the Lombard cities—that dawn that was destined never to reach its meridian splendour, but to expire in the night of a despicable and enduring slavery—was even then a faint light compared to that which emanated from the liberal institutions of the Republic, where a hard-hearted oligarchy, anxious indeed for the glory of the state, but indifferent to human suffering and crime, had not yet seized absolute power, nor sent its victims in misery across the “Bridge of Sighs.” The City of the Isles might at this period be compared to a hero who, still young, had gallantly advanced on the career of glory ; whose aspirations were lofty, whose shield was not bedimmed with blood ; who had not yet acquired and abused (alas ! why should one be consequent on the other !) extensive and uncontrolled power ; to whose future successes one might look with confidence ; and we, at the distance of centuries, may almost partake in the enthusiasm of the old chroniclers, who record the triumph of her conquering sons returned from Constantinople.

The piazzetta, which is situated by the side of the Church of St. Mark, then contained the principal edifices of the Republic ; and it was here the knights and captains of the galleys, that had

\* The Emperor was Frederic Barbarossa ; the Pope, Alexander III. Any Italian history, or the notes to the 4th Canto of *Childe Harold*, will acquaint the reader with these singular proceedings. The following are said, by a Venetian historian, to be the words employed by the Pope in presenting the ring to the Doge, in the presence of all the people : “ Use it, O Venetians, as a chain, wherewith to keep the sea subjected to your dominion. Espouse it with this ring every year, and every year, on the same day, let the celebration of the espousals be renewed, in order that posterity may know that the arms of Venice have acquired the empire of the waves, and that the sea ought to be obedient to her, even as the bride to the husband.”

now come to anchor close to the quay, descended by stairs and platforms prepared for them, and covered with laurels and flowers, banners and silks of Tyrian dye; and it was here their anxious feet again touched their native soil, and their relatives and friends received them to their passionate embrace. As one by one they stepped on shore, the people rent the air with their acclamations; the Signiors of the Republic, in an open balcony, bowed to them, as a herald repeated their distinguished names; whilst the bands of music pealed the notes of triumph, and the fair daughters of Venice "looked and smiled a welcome." The general picture of joy and grief—and grief there was in the midst of all these rejoicings, for many returned not to bless the eyes of affection, but remained in the country they had conquered, and many had sped to those regions whence there is no return—this general picture would be far too vast even to be sketched here, and thus we will attach ourselves to the fortunes and feelings of one who figured in this day's pageantry.

Gherardo was the only son of the patrician Zani, and the most gallant youth of Venice. His love of military glory must have been great; for when the Doge, the incomparable Enrico Dandolo, invited him to follow his banner to the East, he was betrothed to Bianca Celsi, as distinguished for her beauty as he for his valour. Yet, on the threshold of the hymeneal temple, he did not hesitate; he would go where glory and his countrymen summoned him; when the Doge's exploits were achieved, he would return to Venice, and, more deserving of her, lay the laurels at the feet of his young bride. He had been, he had prospered, Constantinople had witnessed his valour; and now, returned, the Piazzetta echoed with the name of Gherardo. He had received the embrace of his aged father without alarm at his tears—for over-wrought joy will weep even as sorrow does; he had been pressed in the arms of the friends of his house and his infancy; and he now advanced to a gentler circle, composed of his female relatives and friends, who, stationed at a balcony, murmured the hero's name, and his welcome back to Venice. But what meant the omission? Bianca was not among them—Bianca, his spouse, was not there to welcome him

with eye and tongue. His voice trembled as he hurriedly asked where she was. An inconsiderate and cruel voice in the crowd answered, "Bianca is no more! she sleeps with her father in the church of Saint Theodore." \*

"No more!" moaned the young warrior, and his flushed face became pale as the monumental marble, and but for his friends he had fallen to the earth like one struck by lightning. When he partially recovered from the first shock, he again raised his eyes to the ladies' balcony: she was indeed not there, where she must have been had life and love animated her. That absence confirmed the truth of the ill-omened voice; his eyes dropped despondingly to the earth, where now, in his youth and his glory, he could have wished to see a grave open for himself. His old father fell on his neck and wept aloud.

For some moments the mind of Gherardo wandered, and his soul was benumbed; but the sight of Alessio, the brother of Bianca, advancing through the crowd, recalled him to consciousness and anguish. "Is it even as they say?" cried he, hoarsely, and stretching out his hand to his friend. Alessio grasped his hand with one of his, and, dashing away the tears from his averted face with the other, he replied, in a suffocated voice, "Alas! and alas! it is even so—Bianca expired yesterday; and as the galley your precursor was appearing, my sister was on her road to the sepulchre!"

Such irremediable woe, where so much bliss was expected,—such an awakening from all the ecstatic dreams and aspirations that had given him strength in battle, and cheered him over the tedious or stormy waves—such a return—such a welcome—such an end to all his fond and passionate hopes, was not to be supported. With a deep groan he swooned away, and the young hero, so lately the happiest among the happy—the most animated where all were animated, was borne, in a lifeless state, to the sad halls of his father.

It was long ere he returned to life and reason; and oh! how

St. Theodore was the patron saint of Venice before St. Mark.

dreadful was his return to the latter ! He would have given the world for some opiate or drug capable of repelling thought and recollection. He closed his eyes to the gay light of the sun—he would have shut out its rays for ever ! He was deaf to the assiduous advice and consolation of his friends, who thronged about him—he was mute too, and asked not a single question as to the malady or decease of his bride. Was it not enough to know that she was for ever torn from him—dead !—what mattered the mode or the circumstances that had led to such a fearful result ? At last he spoke, but it was only to request his father that he might be left alone. The afflicted Signior, with words of affectionate condolence, and prayers that his son would raise his thoughts to the contemplation of that Being in whose hands were life and death, and to whose omnipotent will it was his duty to submit, left the room with tears, and was followed by all the company. When in the silence and solitude of his own chamber, Gherardo looked around him, he felt more than ever the extent of his loss. He rose from the couch on which he had been reclining, and advanced to a curtained recess at the end of the room : he drew the curtains—the sight was a cruel one ! There was the *talamo*, or splendid nuptial bed, his friends had prepared and decorated for his return—there, on the rich velvet and the flowing silk, were the embroidered rose-wreaths, mixed with the laurel crowns, and the initials of his name entrined with those of the name of Bianca. And hungry death was feeding on her roses, and her name, in the mouths of men, had become a note of woe—in his ear a sound of despair ! He threw himself on the ground at the bed's foot, and, burying his burning face in his hands, gave vent for the first time to a copious flood of tears.

As thus he lay, humbled in the dust, with all his thoughts in the dark and narrow grave, the sun shone brightly on Venice, and her thronging thousands, replete with joy, sang their songs of triumph, and shouted the names of their gallant warriors and the captains of their galleys. It could not be that *his* should be forgotten ; for who had borne himself more bravely than he ? and as a crowd passed in front of his paternal abode, their united voices proclaimed,

"Gherardo ! Gherardo ! Long life and glory to Gherardo, the soldier of St. Mark !" The sounds struck his ears, but *now* they could elicit only a bitter smile.

The passing hours did not restore tranquillity to the bereft bridegroom ; but, as the shades of night descended, a wild idea,—an uncontrollable impulse invaded him. "And shall my fond eyes obtain not a last glance of that being of love and beauty ? Shall my Bianca," reasoned the passionate youth (if such movement of the feelings can be called reason)—"my betrothed, be consumed by vile worms, and I not see the loveliness she must have carried to the grave ? She died but yesterday—she must still be beautiful !—Yes ! I will see her once again ! I will once again press those lips, though they be cold—cold !"

At a late hour, he secretly left his father's house for the well-known church—alas ! he was to have been married there ! A handful of gold gained over the sacristano, who unlocked the door of the temple and retired. Gherardo stood alone, a few paces from Bianca's tomb. A few lamps burned here and there dimly, before the effigies of the Virgin Mother and of the most conspicuous saints ; the moon shed an uncertain light through the painted glass of the lofty and narrow Gothic windows ; but away among the massy columns, and through the long aisles of the church, there fell the obscurity of "the valley of the shadow of death ;" and sounds there were none, save the fast-coming sighs of the hapless lover. The hour, the spot, the awful stillness, were all calculated to overpower the mind with indescribable emotion ; the age was one of extreme superstition, and our young soldier's philosophy had not taught him to rise superior to the popular credence ; the state of his feelings too—and nothing is more imaginative or creative of ideal horrors than a certain stage of grief—contributed to delude the senses ; and as the cressets trembled, and the moonlight, strangely coloured by the stained glass through which it passed, gleamed now brighter, and now fainter, now resting on this object of somewhat grotesque architecture of the church, now on that, he saw, or fancied, the spirits

of the departed rising one by one, and mournfully waving their hands, as if warning him against a sacrilegious intrusion on the regions of the dead. Through the postern door, by which he had entered, and which the sacristano had left ajar, there suddenly blew a gust of fresh night-breeze, that, moaning among the columns, and over the hollow marble pavement of the church, sounded in his ear like a voice, but not of earth, like the united lamentations of sad, or guilt-burdened spirits. He clung to one of the pillars for support, and was for some moments incapable of motion. His natural courage, and the intenseness of the feeling and purpose that had brought him thither, soon, however, came to his aid, and he strode with hasty steps to the cappella, or lateral recess of the temple, beneath which was the tomb of his bride's family. Here, in this deep recess, the moon could not shed a beam; but he was guided to the door of the sepulchre by a lamp that flickered on the altar of the cappella. Hurried, breathless, he laid his hand upon that door; massy, and bound with heavy iron and with bronze, it required a great effort to open it. He pressed his muscular shoulder against it; it receded; but as it turned on its unwilling hinges, it produced a hoarse rumbling sound that echoed like thunder in the vault beneath, and caused him to start back with trembling limbs and cold sweat on his brow. Again, however, desperation, love, the determination to see the lifeless form of his beloved, conquered his awe and the repugnance for disturbing the peace of the grave; yet he paused ere he plunged into the horrible, palpable obscurity that lay beyond the door of the tomb, and, crossing himself, murmured a prayer to the blessed Virgin who saw his woe, and might pity or pardon his sacrilegious audacity. He then rushed down a few steps, through a short dark passage, and, himself like a spectre, entered the narrow chamber of death. A lamp, beneath a crucifix, burned at the head of the avello, or sarcophagus of Bianca, and a grated window, near the roof of the vault, admitted the rays of the moon, that fell almost perpendicularly on that cold white marble. He grasped at once the heavy cover of the coffin—had he hesitated he might have been



effectually deterred from completing his sad, wild enterprise. His nervous arms moved the weight, and then his eyes rested on the shrouded form of his Bianca, whose head was enveloped in a veil of pure white, and her "decent limbs composed" beneath an ample white robe. His brain reeled at the sight, and the lamp which he had grasped fell from his hand. When he recovered strength to proceed, the light from the grated window fell full in the open coffin; and, as his trembling hands withdrew the veil, a clear broad ray of the moon illuminated the face of his lovely bride. \* \* \* And could this be death? Why even thus she looked when life and love coursed through her young veins! even thus, when after a day of joy she slept a balmy sleep, a night of peace! And were not the long loose tresses crossed on her innocent bosom the same as erst, and the pale smooth brow, and the broad eyelids, with their long black fringes, and the cherub mouth, with lips slightly apart, as if smiling in some blissful dream! "No! this cannot be death!" cried Gherardo, deliriously; "she sleeps, she only sleeps! Oh, wake! in pity, wake, my Bianca, my love, my wife!" He was silent for a moment, and gazed on her beautiful, moonlit countenance, as if expecting she would really rise at his passionate adjuration. "Bianca!" continued he; "my own Bianca! why dost thou slumber thus! dost thou await the warm kisses of thy lover to awaken thee! I give them thee!" and throwing himself across the marble coffin he pressed his quivering lips to hers. But how did his whole soul rush to his mouth, when he fancied he felt the breath of life on those pale lips! He pressed them again—if it was a delusion, it continued—for the mildest, the most subdued of breathings, seemed to pass from her lips to his. He raised her from the sarcophagus, he placed his hand on her heart, and language has no power to paint his emotions when he felt, plainly felt that heart palpitate beneath his hand! Another moment and her eyes opened, whilst a low murmur escaped her lips. Gherardo clasped her wildly in his embrace, and leaned for support against the sarcophagus, where, as they stood, mute, motionless, and pale, almost like statues, in

the moonlight, it would have been difficult to tell which of the two, or whether both, had not been awakened from the sleep of death.

The chronicler's tale is told. The ignorance of the physicians, and the immediate sepulture after death, usual in the South, had consigned Bianca to the grave, from which the passion and impetuosity of her lover saved her so opportunely. The fair Venetian passed almost at once from the marble sarcophagus to the nuptial bed of silk and velvet. The church, where the echoes of her funeral dirge might almost seem yet to linger, pealed with the notes of her hymencals : and her bridal coronet of white roses was supplied by the tree that had furnished flowers for her funeral.



## the Fatal Nuptials.



Why didst not tell me sooner !  
*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

## THE FATAL NUPTIALS.

Dopo lunga tenzone  
Verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia  
Caccerà l'altra con molta offensione.

*Inferno, c. vi.*

WHO can look down on fair Florence from "her theatre of hills," and not recall the first of her poets, Dante, whose words we quote as referring to the tale we are about to relate; and who that sees the white walls of the Etrurian Athens on some tranquil summer evening, gazing from vineyard or olive grove, but contrasts that tranquillity and loveliness with the moral tempests that so long convulsed her in the earlier ages of her Republic? And yet, if he who forms this contrast be one educated to consider liberty, and enterprise, and moral excitement as essential to his existence, he will be tempted almost to prefer the stormy, energetic days of the Florentine Republic, with all their factions, their bloodshed and proscriptions, to the silken times of peace, indolence, and subjection that have succeeded, and rendered the Florentine people such as we now see them.

But at the date of this tale, or in the year of our grace one thousand two hundred and fifteen, Florence was as tranquil as she now is: the family feuds, which ended, as they often will, in political factions, had not yet commenced, though they were on the very eve of so doing, from the facts of this same story.

On a lovely morning in spring, Messer Bondelmonte de' Bondelmonti, the son of a Florentine noble descended from the

Lords of Montebuono, in the upper valley of the Arno, took his departure from the pleasant town of Fiesole, where he had been visiting a friend, to return to Florence. The journey was a short one, and he might loiter on his way, to enjoy the refreshing morning air on the hills, and the scenic beauty that was before and around him. From the ridge of the lofty and picturesque eminence on which Fiesole is situated, he could catch a full view of Florence, with her church towers, her massy palaces, and contiguous villas ; and he could look down on the fertile valley of the Arno, where

She reaps  
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps  
To laughing life, with her redundant horn.

By turning round on the scene he was leaving, and sometimes by the winding of the road, he could cool and delight his eye by the prospect of the green groves of pines and ilex, intermingled here and there with a melancholy cypress, that cover the breaks and swells of the Fiesolan hill ; and above those groves he could distinguish the town of Fiesole itself, with the dome of its cathedral ; and above that dome again, and far away behind that hill, the boldly towering Apennines. But neither the loveliness of the scene, nor its historical connexion, nor the by-gone glory of old Fæsulæ, one of the twelve Etrurian cities, that were the first in Italy to cultivate the fine arts, which again, and after so many centuries, dawned in these favourite districts ; nor the recollections of the Fæsulæan soothsayers and prognosticators, who were distinguished even above those of the other Etruscan towns (was there no lingering fragment of their science in Fiesole to foretell to the unhappy youth all that was about to befall him ?) No ! neither, nor all of these, filled the heart of Messer Bondelmonte, and made him loiter on his way, as though lead were fastened to the feet of his steed. The fact was, he was going to be married ! His bride was at Florence ; and her deficiency in personal or other charms, which rendered him for the time insensible to the redundancy of nature's beauty spread before him, made him

almost wish the short ride from Fiesole to Florence should have no end.

“Softly—gently then, my gallant white palfrey!” said he, as his horse, on reaching a piece of even sward, leant on his bit, and showed his inclination for a canter: “by the rood! we shall be at Florence soon enough!—soon enough for me, at least!” and then Messer Bondelmonte mused to himself.

“It is too late repining; but, in truth, I have been too obedient, in a matter of such enduring importance, to the will or the wishes of others. What is it to me that the broad and fertile lands of the Amadei family, to be given in dowry to my bride, lie close to mine, if my heart is to be as remote from her, as hence to the Pole? What are the jewels and the gold, the diamonds and the pearls, for which they have ransacked Florence, and Venice, richer still, if they cannot create an appetite where there is none?—and will her splendid robes, her silks, her velvets, and her Eastern shawls, have power to hide from an unlucky husband the defects of face or figure? I am not so avaricious as my kindred; or my avarice is in beauty—in female beauty, that I adore, and had always hoped to possess in her who should be my bride. Yes, I would give many of Clorinda’s fat acres on the Arno for a fairer colour on her cheek and brow; I would give her tall castle for a graceful feminine, truly feminine form; her diamonds I would barter for brilliant eyes, her pearls for better teeth; and her velvets and her silks, though all of the bright Tyrian dye, I would willingly surrender for a better colour on Clorinda’s temper, which is dark and rough as that peasant’s coat. And are all my youthful dreams of loveliness and love—love passionate, yet legitimate—the sacred and reciprocated flame of a young and confiding wife, to come to this? And am I not to know the domestic bliss, the hallowed affections that gather round the social hearth, when a marriage is well assorted; and are all those bright, soul-filling scenes of my imagination, where a beautiful bride hung on my neck, in sweet tears at every parting, and bounded and glowed with joy at my every return,—are these indeed to be but pictures of the brain, with no counterpart or reality?—Well! well! it must

be even so—I have gone too far to recede—I must go on—a plague on the palfrey ! how impatient is the beast !—I must go on to Florence, and sign the settlements ; and, love or not love, prepare to marry *Clorinda degli Amadei*.”

With thoughts as unpleasant as these, Messer Bondelmonte rode at last into the busy city of Florence, for, loiter as he would, so short a journey must have an end. He had returned the salutations of many of his friends in the public square—the forum of the more modern Italians, who transact at least as much of their business, and pass as much of their time, in the open air and in public places, as their predecessors in the days of the Romans ; he had hesitated as to which street he should ride up, and had nearly taken another than that of the Donati, which simple circumstance would probably have entirely changed his fate, and was at length riding slowly along the street, and was near the palace of the Donati family, then occupied by a rich widow of that very distinguished Florentine family. As he came opposite to that house, which was furnished, as many of the residences of the Florentine nobles already were,\* with strong square towers and ample means of defence, the gate was thrown half open, and, to his no small surprise, the rich widow herself beckoned to him, and addressed him from the threshold. Too young and too gallant to disobey the summons of a lady, and of a lady like the Donati, whose once dazzling beauty was scarcely on the wane, the bridegroom dismounted at the gate.

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\* In the course of the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline, Bianchi and Neri, and the internal wars which were waged, these palaces became indeed castles and strongholds. Every traveller in Italy must have observed at Florence, as in many other cities, that the architecture is still influenced by the character of these turbulent times. The ingenious and critical Forsyth says, “The palaces may be divided into two classes : those of republican date and the modern. The former had originally towers, like the Pisan, which were introduced towards the close of the tenth century, as a private defence in the free cities of Italy. To these succeeded a new construction, more massive, if possible, and more ostentatiously severe, than the Etruscan itself ; a construction which fortified the whole basement of the palace with large, rude, rugged bossages, and thus gave always an imposing aspect, and sometimes a necessary defence, to the nobility of a town for ever subject to insurrection. Such are the palaces of the Medici, the Strozzi, the Pitti.”

"You are right welcome, Messer Bondelmonte!" said the widow, laying her soft hand on his; "and I am indeed happy, on a day like this, to congratulate you on your marriage, though your bride be dingy and deformed, and I had destined you as rich and a lovelier wife." Having thus said, she drew him forward by the arm she had touched, and closed the gate, within which Bondelmonte found himself in the presence of an exquisitely beautiful girl, in her fifteenth summer, the daughter and only child of the widow Donati, whose great wealth she would inherit.

"Is this the lovelier wife you had destined me?" inquired Bondelmonte, after a long and thrilling gaze of admiration, in which he saw more than all the charms his fancy had ever painted in her who should be his bride.

"Ay, even such she is—do you think her fair?" replied the widow, fixing her penetrating eyes on the young nobleman. He did not reply; but an expression of full satisfaction, of triumph, at the result of her experiment on his susceptible heart, was in her eyes when she continued:

"I had destined this maiden—my dear, my only child—for you; but, Messer Bondelmonte, of what avail are now my intentions? You are betrothed and——"

"Will never marry Clorinda degli Amadei!" passionately exclaimed the young man. "No! since you have kept your fair daughter for me—since you have destined her for my arms—I should be ungrateful and most insensate, being yet free, to forego so much beauty, and marry any but her. By Heaven! she is the very being I would have chosen from a hundred thousand beauties, and if you—if she object not, I will this instant make her my wife!" Here Bondelmonte fell on his knee, and took the hand of the fair girl, who blushed, but neither withdrew it nor her large black eyes, that were riveted on the handsome manly face of her ready lover. The widow stood by delighted, but silent.

"Will you not consent to my wishes?" inquired the ardent young man, looking alternately at mother and daughter; "will you not accept me as the lover—the husband——"

"As the saints are kind to me, and as I hope for a continuance



of the happiness I now enjoy," replied the Donati, "but this has been my heart's desire and hope for years. But your odious engagements with the Amadei, and the persuasions of *your* friends, and the threats of your *bride's* friends—can you still brave them, and wed my daughter?"

"This instant, I say again ; and I swear it, by the blessed Evangelists !" exclaimed Bondelmonte.

"Your oath is passed ! take then my child. Celestina, receive your husband !" said the widow, who saw with delight, that still increased, the ardour with which Messer Bondelmonte clasped her trembling, blushing daughter to his heart.

The party that had so suddenly met, and with such rapid and serious consequences to their meeting, now ascended the staircase ; for all this had passed just within the gate, where the widow had, as it were, entrapped the cavalier, and had seemed at first doubtful whether her bait could stay a man who was on his way to sign his marriage papers, and make *him*, so nearly the husband of an Amadei, the spouse of a Donati. No sooner were Celestina and Bondelmonte seated side by side, in a saloon, so elegant and so quiet that it seemed made for wooing, than the determined and active widow left them to themselves and went to prepare for the nuptials, on which she had so set her heart that she was quite indifferent to any evil consequences that might follow, or rather was unmindful of them, in her present joy.

However sweet and impassioned it might be, there surely never was wooing shorter than that of Messer Bondelmonte. The Donati re-appeared in less than a quarter of an hour with a priest, her chaplain and confessor ; and in less than another quarter, and at the moment his friends expected him to sign and seal on parchment for another bride, the cavalier was the husband of the lovely Celestina, and confirming his contract on her downcast eyes and balmy lips with passionate kisses !

So thoroughly enchanted had the before despondent, indifferent bridegroom been, from the very moment that he cast his eyes on the beautiful Celestina, whom he had never seen till then, and who was now his wife, that not one pause or reflection as to the serious

nature of the offence, the unpardonable offence he was committing against the family and allies of his affianced Clorinda, or as to the serious fact that he had indeed gone too far in that affair to be able to recede without a breach of honour and sacrifice of character, occurred to stay the impetuosity of his will and passions.

And it must be said in excuse for the warm-hearted young man, that the alliance with the Amadei had really been forced upon him by the untiring importunities of his relations and friends; that Clorinda was no handsomer or better tempered than has been described; that he had all the tender susceptibilities to love, and affection, and beauty, that he attributed to himself in his soliloquy when on the way from Fiesole; that Celestina's beauty, to which the excitement of the moment might have added, was dazzling and irresistible; and that the dull, tame, odious state of mind he was in, was peculiarly exposed to a sudden incursion of passion: for it will be found on extended observation, that half of our sudden and imprudent steps, that half of our violent *improviste* and injudicious attachments are formed, if not calculatedly to escape *ennui*, at least during the reign of that monstrous feeling, with disgust at ourselves and the world, and an impatience for some excitement, be it what it may.

If Messer Bondelmonte had not found time to think beforehand, it was not very likely he should be cool enough so to do when the lovely daughter of the Donati was his obedient and loving wife. He satisfied himself with inquiring whether his favourite palfrey, which he had left at the gate of the house, had been taken in and attended to, and (here we will not attempt to excuse him!) never cared to advise his friends as to where he was and what he was doing.

When the day passed away and no Bondelmonte came to sign the marriage settlements, or dissipate the ill-will that had gathered on the brows of the father and brothers of Clorinda, and all the Amadei; when it was ascertained that he had left Fiesole in the morning, and had even been seen in Florence by many persons; and when the night came and went, and still there came no Bondelmonte, his family arrived at the melancholy conclusion that he

had been murdered. But when they learned the following day that he had only been married, their grief was scarcely less, their consternation much greater.

This astounding information, which, as it will so frequently happen, had reached them by other channels, while Messer Bondelmonte was studying the most delicate and best way of breaking it to them, was almost at the same moment conveyed to the already irritated Amadei. Had poison been poured into their ear instead of words, had a number of minute adders slid through that organ and reached and stung the brain in its most exquisitely sensible parts, the effect could scarcely have been worse than it was in some of the nearer relations of the forsaken Clorinda. Thus to have their alliance spurned—thus to receive an affront, public, notorious, before the eyes of all Florence, thus, when every contract was prepared to have them rudely torn, and thrown as it were in their faces, as though they were dogs, and their deeds garbage fit for them, to be obliged to bear the broken engagements and violated faith, and all this from a Bondelmonte, for it must be remarked, that rivalry and ill-will, which the marriage of Clorinda was to conciliate, had formerly existed between these two powerful Florentine families, to brook his and the Donati's scorn. But, no! at once it was determined by execrations and solemn oaths, that they would not bear this; and the Amadei, as customary in those ages, called upon their relations and near connexions to consult with them what was to be done to efface the stain the honour of their house had received.

The call was readily attended to, and the Alberti, the nearest of all their allies, the Fifanti, the Lamberti, the Gangalandi, assembled in the halls of the Amadei, the second evening after the irregular marriage, and while Messer Bondelmonte was still enchanted with his fair young bride, and blessing the boldness and choice of her mother, that had allied him to the Donati and Celestina.

The hall in the massy Amadei palace, the scene of this noways pacific family compact, was vast and gloomy; and seated at an immense oaken table, whose planks were furnished by the neighbouring forests of Vallombrosa, and under the pale, yellow light

that glared from large iron cressets suspended from the roof, or walking up and down the apartment with hurried pace, the light flickering but here and there on their agitated countenances from sconces on the dark walls, these angry Florentine nobles looked not unlike conspirators met to determine the ruin of a state. The death of one man they *did* determine ; for, when the whole business was expounded, and the general indignation heightened by the individual rage and curses of each present, it was concluded that this insult could not be borne without shame, nor avenged with any other vengeance than the death of Messer Bondelmonte.\* Some indeed there were among the party, the cooler or the older, who would have paused to reflect on all the evils that might ensue to them and their friends, and the peace of the whole city of Florence, from his assassination, (for a fair duel was never thought of,) but their prudence failed before the headlong impetuosity of the majority, and all their suggestions as to different modes of proceeding with the Bondelmonti were disregarded, and finally silenced, by the ferocious Mosca Lamberti, who exclaimed—

“ Away with all this deliberation and idle talk ! They who think on many things, conclude nothing ! What is once done, is done, and there’s an end.” †

The last words of Mosca’s sentence, repeated in a forcibly repressed under-tone of voice, more revengeful and horrible than the fiercest exclamation pronounced out, were the death warrant of Messer Bondelmonte ; and Mosca Lamberti, Stiatta Uberty, Lambertuccio Amadei, and Oderigo Fifanti, took the execution of it into their own hands.

The thoughtless husband,—still the passionate lover, continued

\* Che questa ingiuria non si poteva senza vergogna tollerare, nè con altra vendetta che con la morte di Messer Bondelmonte vendicare.”—Machiavelli.

† The words used by Mosca Lamberti, which Machiavelli calls “ *quella trita, nota sentenza*,” (that trite and well-known sentence, or proverb,) and in which I cannot find any thing equivocal or obscure, as does M. Sismondi, were “ *cosa fatta capo ha*,” (literally, “ what is done has a head.”) This proverb became a sentence of blood in after-times, and the Republicans of Florence could not hear it without shuddering. It was somewhat like the “ *A la lanterne !*” of the Republicans of France.

meanwhile in the house of the rich widow, as entirely absorbed by Celestina, and detached from all the world beside, as ever could have been Rinaldo in the garden of Armida. But such a state of things, with such a seclusion, (blissful that it was !) could not last for ever :—it was indispensable that Bondelmonte should see his family, and again appear in the world and the world's affairs ; and at last he took leave of his beautiful bride, who indeed realized one of the scenes of his imagination, and hung on his neck and shed sweet tears at this their first parting. The counterpart to this scene, alas ! he was never to see, and never was the heart of his Celestina to bound and glow at his return.

Had a holy and a solemn season had power, as it should, over the hardened hearts of his enemies, their hands had been stayed, for a while at least, for most holy and most solemn was the season when Messer Bondelmonte left his weeping bride, and, more than once on the point of returning to her, took his way towards the Arno. It was the day of Our Lord's resurrection. He ought to have known that it was not so easy to forget such an insult as he had offered to the Amadei, as it was for him to renounce the honour of their alliance ; but he probably thought not of the matter at all ; and riding on the same favourite white palfrey that had carried him before the house of the Donati, and so unexpectedly to a wife, he reached the Ponte Vecchio, or old bridge, and was about to cross the river. Scarcely, however, was the fore-foot of his horse on the stones of the bridge, when he was assaulted by the men who had resolved on his death, and who had issued from some houses of the Amadei, situated between the Ponte Vecchio and Santo Stefano. The first blows of their avenging daggers in his back and his side would have been sufficient, for he fell mortally wounded at the foot of the statue of the god Mars, the protecting divinity when Florence was yet pagan, and which still stood on its pedestal at the end of the old bridge : but the infuriated Amadei did not think they had sufficiently revenged their wrongs until Messer Bondelmonte was pierced with innumerable wounds, and left a horribly disfigured corpse.

Neither by Ricordano Malespina, nor the other Tuscan chroni.

clers, nor by Machiavelli, who has only copied their recital, are we informed of the fate of the widowed Celestina, widowed in the first days of her happiness,—nor can we say,

Where lived *her* grief, or perish'd her despair ;—

but the last-mentioned historian, in brief and energetic language, acquaints us with the civil wars, and the horrors of persecution and party, that befell the city of Florence in consequence of these nefarious transactions.

“This murder divided all the city,—one part attaching itself to the Bondelmonti, the other to the Uberti and Amadei. And as these families were powerful in houses, in towers, and in men, they combated together many years in Florence, without being able the one to drive the other out; and though their enmities were not terminated by peace, they compounded with each other in truces ; and in this way, according to occurring circumstances, they would be at times quiet, and at times up in flames. And Florence was in these troubles to the time of Frederic II., who, to strengthen himself against the Church of Rome, and to consolidate his power in Tuscany, favoured the Uberti and their followers, which party, by that favour, were able to expel the Bondelmonti, and thus our city of Florence, like all the rest of Italy, was long and unhappily divided into Guelphs and Ghibellines.”\*

\* Delle Istorie Fiorentine, lib. ii. It should appear, however, that before this fatal quarrel the two parties had friends and advocates among the Florentine nobles, and that the Bondelmonti professed a great attachment to the Pope, consequently were Guelph ; whilst the Amadei were known for their attachment to the cause of the Emperor, or the rival faction.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### *Thirteenth Century.*

FROM THE RENEWAL OF THE LOMBARD LEAGUE, TO THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

1234.—THE war between the Lombard League and the Emperor.—“About sixty years after the treaty which had been concluded at Venice between the Lombard republics and the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, a new war was kindled in the same country, between the same Lombard League, and a second Frederic, the grandson of Barbarossa. The motives of this new war appear, at first sight, to be the same as those of the preceding: on one part, the ancient prerogatives of the empire were advanced; on the other, the rights of citizens, and the acknowledged liberties of the cities. In the thirteenth century, as in the twelfth, the Church declared itself the protectress of the Republics, and gave the most fatal blows to the Emperor by attacking him with spiritual arms. It is easy to confuse the two Frederics, the two Lombard Leagues, the two long struggles between the royal authority and liberty. There exists, however, an important difference between the two wars. The first was of necessity; it included nothing less than for the cities to defend their most precious rights, their honour, their very existence. The second might probably have been avoided, if the insidious politics of the Church of Rome had not excited and maintained the discord; if the force and the wealth of the Lombards had not inspired them with too much arrogance and self-confidence. As the motives of the war were less pure, its consequences were also less honourable. With as much courage and constancy as in the preceding century, with a development of forces still greater, the Italian Republicans, for the most part, repelled the Imperial authority only to fall under the yoke of tyranny. The power, without bounds, of the chiefs of parties who became sovereigns, supplied the place, in a great number of the cities, of the legitimate and moderated power of the constitutional monarch.”\*

1235.—Frederic II. took his rebellious son prisoner, and sent him into Apulia, where he died. The Pope Gregory IX. was pretty generally accused of instigating this unnatural conflict between father and son.

1236.—We have already alluded to the establishment of the House of Romano, in the Trevisan March. From 1198 to the present date, that family

\* Sismondi, Hist. Rep. Ital. chap. xvi.

had gradually increased its power and possessions, and its ambition had developed with its good fortunes, when this year Eccelin III., who was Podestà of Verona, by persuading the inhabitants of that strong and important city, who were Ghibellines, to admit an Imperial garrison, secured to himself the means of consolidating his power. This Eccelin III., justly surnamed by his contemporaries "The Ferocious," was the first and most formidable of those tyrants who rent the robe of Italian liberty, and the consummate art, the remorseless means, with which he deluded and oppressed the jealous republics that surrounded him, until, one by one, they fell into his iron grasp, are most deserving of attention and study.

1237.—Frederic II., with a force of two thousand German horse and ten thousand Saracens, whom he brought from the Apulian colony, defeated the Guelphs at Corte Nuova, and took the Carroccio of Milan, which the Milanese, however, deprived of its banners and ornaments ere they abandoned it. Despoiled as it was, the Emperor esteemed the capture of this Palladium of his enemies as of no small importance : he sent it to Cremona as a trophy of his victory ; and soon after forwarded it to the Roman senate and people, with letters, preserved in the interesting collection of Pietro delle Vigne, in which he glorifies himself on so brilliant a success. By cruelly treating, and finally putting to death on a scaffold, Pietro Tiepolo, son of the Doge of Venice, and Podestà of Milan for that year, Frederic so irritated the Venetians, that they joined the Lombard League, to which they had hitherto been neutral.

1239.—Frederic was excommunicated by Gregory IX. Pietro delle Vigne, his secretary, his bosom friend, and chancellor of the Empire, justified him before the people of Padua. Gregory IX. died in 1241, but his successor, Innocent IV., who was elected after a vacancy of nearly two years, continued the hostility to the Emperor, and headed the Guelph, or Church party, for the terms were synonymous.

1244.—A conspiracy was formed by the determined Franciscan monks, at the suggestion, as they afterwards confessed, of the Pope, against the life of the Emperor. The Pope fled, rather than confront the criminals who accused him ; but the following year, at the council of Lyons, he formally deposed the Emperor Frederic, and invited his subjects to choose a successor, assuming to himself and Cardinals the right of providing for the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

1246.—Frederic might with his own hands fix his various crowns upon his head, but he could not wear them without that head's aching. The conspiracy of the San Severini, the most powerful of the Neapolitan nobles, was excited by the Church ; and he had a deeper pang still to experience when he was made to believe that Pietro delle Vigne, his confidant and the bosom friend of so many years, had joined the nefarious plot, and aimed at his life by poison. The guilt or the innocence of this able minister is involved in deep obscurity ; but if we suppose Pietro innocent of the crimes, the anguish of his master must



have been the greater on discovering that he had been sacrificed to the suspicious temper a long course of treachery had excited in his royal breast, and to the insinuations of envious courtiers. In elegance and correctness of style,—in the art of writing letters,—in eloquence and general civilization and talent, we look in vain on the dark pages of these centuries for the equal of Pietro delle Vigne, who, on hearing that his master condemned him to the loss of his eyes, beat out his brains against the wall.

1250.—Frederic II. did not long outlive his accomplished secretary: he died this year, at an obscure town in Capitanata, leaving behind him a reputation to be most oppositely represented, as his chroniclers were Guelphs or Ghibellines. The lovers of literature, however, will never forget that, in spite of the wars and the troubles in which his life was passed, he not only encouraged letters, but was himself among the very first to cultivate Italian poetry.

1251.—The Pope Innocent IV. returned to Italy, and revealed his project of attaching the whole of the beautiful kingdom of Naples to the Holy See; but the talents and valour of Manfred, a natural son of Frederic, who assumed the reins of government in the name of Conrad, the legitimate son and successor of Frederic, were too much for him.

1253.—Conrad arrived in Italy, and endeavoured in vain to reconcile himself with the Church. The Pope offered the crown of Naples to Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother of our weak sovereign, Henry III.

1254.—Conrad died suddenly, at Lavello, and his natural brother Manfred was accused by the Church of having poisoned him. Manfred's party was strong in the kingdom, and the Saracens of Apulia at once declared for him, in spite of their governor.

1258.—Manfred placed on his head the crown of the Two Sicilies, on hearing that his nephew Conradin was dead in Germany; but when he learned his young nephew was still living, he promised to declare him his successor.

1260.—The Ghibellines of Tuscany recurred to Manfred, who was now the head of that party. The celebrated battle of the Arbia, in which the Florentines sustained a sanguinary defeat, was fought this year, and the Ghibellines in consequence became masters of the city of Florence, which they once thought of destroying, as Frederic Barbarossa had done by Milan.

1266.—The hatred of the Roman See to the House of Suabia was to know no truce. Alexander IV. had succeeded Innocent, Urban IV. had succeeded Alexander, and Clement IV. Urban, when, by the often repeated and strenuously pressed invitation of the Church, Charles of Anjou entered the Neapolitan kingdom, and after the defeat and death of the brave Manfred at the battle of the Grandella, took the crown of the Two Sicilies, which countries were to be held by him and his successors as a fief of the Church.

1267.—The young Conradin, invited from Germany by the Ghibellines, arrived at Verona at the end of this year.

1268.—Conradin went to Pisa, which Republic made most powerful efforts in

his favour. He penetrated into the kingdom of Naples by the mountainous provinces of the Abruzzi, and at Tagliacozzi sustained a complete defeat. He was soon afterwards taken at Astura, near the mouth of the Tiber, was tried by the simulacre of a tribunal of justice, and beheaded in the public piazza of Naples, by order of the ferocious Charles of Anjou.

1272.—The new Pope, Gregory X., undertook the laudable but infructuous task of reconciling the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, whose dissensions were at every moment deluging the little Italian states with blood.

1273.—The Venetians went to war with the Bolognese about the navigation of the river Po. This same year witnessed the tragical death of Imelda de' Lambertazzi, and the commencement of the troubles of Bologna.

1276.—This year witnessed three Popes: Innocent V., Adrian V., and John XXI.

1279.—Was the beginning of the unwearying efforts of that most astonishing of conspirators, Giovanni di Procida, which ended in—

1282.—The massacre of the French, so well known under the name of "The Sicilian Vespers," and the destruction of Charles of Anjou's power in Sicily.



## The Doomed King.

Buono studio, rompe ria fortuna.

*Saying of Charles of Anjou, reported by Malespini.*

Biondo era e bello e di gentile aspetto.

DANTE, *Purgatorio*, canto iii.

THE moon was riding in the high heaven, and the hour of midnight was written on her face, as a party of travellers were seen to ascend the first steps of that magnificent chain of mountains that confines the rich and lovely Neapolitan province "La Campagna felice," and that meeting the eye afar off, from the blue waves of the Mediterranean, presents the aspect of a sublime amphitheatre girding a matchless arena,—the plain that stretches from the banks of the minute Sebeto to the mouth of the bolder river, the Liris, or the Garigliano.

These mountains were everywhere rugged and steep ; but the travellers avoided the more frequented and less difficult bridle-path that was before them, and, striking off to the left, took the wildest and very roughest of the dells that furrow these Apennines. This might seem strange ; but there were other things in the equipment, and character, and general appearance of these midnight wayfarers, that still more might excite curiosity and surmise. The troop seemed too numerous to escape observation, or to be bent on a secret expedition, but, at the same time, too few to pretend

to the character of an army, or to sustain a long combat.\* At the same time there was an order in their march, a silence, and a respectful subordination, which would not have been found in the marauding bands of that period. They were all well mounted, and all wore long cloaks, which, when thrown aside by the night breeze or the motions of the arm, necessitated by the difficulties of the way and the frequent floundering of their steeds, left revealed bright suits of armour and arms beneath them. But two of the troop were distinguished from the rest :—of these two, one rode foremost in the cavalcade on an Arabian mare, with Oriental saddle and accoutrements ; his head was bound with a snow-white turban, his face was jet-black : the other, who was immediately behind him, was fair and comely in complexion and features, which wore an expression of deep care, of authority and dignity ; a steel casque, curiously inlaid with silver, and bright in polish, was on his graceful head ; and an eagle in silver surmounted the casque : he rode a robust, active white palfrey, that champed a silver curb, and cast his foam on a poitrail studded with the same metal and with costly jewels. As the troop gained the brow of a hill that rose by the side of the deep ravine into which they had entered, and allowed a view through the mouth of the glen of the regions they had just left, and the walled town and fortress of Acerra, situated on the declivities of a hill on the opposite side of a well-cultivated valley, the cavalier of the silver eagle drew rein, and pointing backward to the castle, whose gloomy walls emitted from one casement the cheering rays of a taper, addressed the turbaned African who preceded him.

“Sadik,” said he, “dost thou think I shall find so hospitable a reception whither I am going, as in the place I have left ? Will Luceria be as true as Acerra, and thy Saracens as faithful as those attached friends there in the castle hall, that are drinking success to my enterprise in midnight draughts of wine ?”

“Faithful and true, and attached, without the wine ; that must

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\* Sa suite etait trop nombreuse pour n'etre pas remarqu e, mais trop foible pour soutenir un long combat.”.—Sismondi, Rep. Ital. ch. xviii.

not defile the lips of the children of the Prophet," replied the Mahometan, in a tone which, to one who did not know him, might have passed for that of sulkiness.

"Forward, then ! forward, Sadik !" exclaimed the crested cavalier, "and let us prove their faith ! my fortunes, my life, must be dependent on them, and I would not lose a moment in hastening to solve the problem, whether the Saracens will be mine or the Pope's—whether they will guard me with their scimitars, or give me up in chains to my enemies !"

The muttered exclamation of "God is great !" was the only reply made by the African, who spurred his horse up the mountain's side, and waved a short crooked sword in his hand. The party followed him closely for some time, at the end of which he was seen to rein up his sagacious mare, and, bending over his saddle-bow, to look intently forward.

"What now ?" cried the impatient cavalier ; "why this halt, Sadik ?"

"A gulf like Eblis is before me, as deep and as dark ; and I can see no path for foot of horse, or even man," calmly replied the African.

As the words died away on his swarthy lips, a dense cloud obscured the moon, that had hitherto lighted their steps ; and every horseman drew rein, being unable to see his way, or whether the next step, or the least variation in their line of march, would not precipitate them into the pitch-black chasm that had seemed yawning for them as a vast and hungry grave. The situation was indeed perilous, nor did there appear to be any possible way of extricating themselves from it. They had advanced along a ridge of rock, so narrow that they could not turn their horses on it : on their left hand, the mountain rose high and stark like a wall ; and it would have been impossible for a human being to scale its perpendicular rocky side, had they been inclined to abandon their horses ; to their right was the dark chasm, or gulf, a branch of which cut off their path before them—in short, it appeared they could make neither an advancing, a retrograde, or lateral movement ; and that an enemy, were it even but a stripling, with

strength enough to roll stones from the cliffs above their heads, might in a few minutes destroy them where they were. The eye of the cavalier of the silver eagle was seen to glare fiery red as he exclaimed to one in his suite—

“Conrad Capece ! is it thus thou playest the part of guide ?—at thy direction we have taken this cut-throat of a passage.”

“We should have found more cut-throats had we taken the easier road across the mountains, and gone by the Castle of Monteforte, garrisoned by the adherents of the Marquis of Hohemburg and thy foes,” replied the person addressed.

“But thou hast brought us where we cannot move a foot’s length ; and every moment, I tell thee, is of value—of a value I cannot calculate. By the rood ! and I ’gin doubt thou wouldst give me up to those who thirst for my blood, and that too in a spot where I cannot wave my sword for it, and where my fate would never be known !” exclaimed the cavalier.

“Such doubts are insults to my brother and myself,” said Marino Capece, another of the suite ; “but we must forget them and the impatience of the moment. We have followed thee voluntarily and devotedly : we told but the truth when we said that every pass of these mountains, where are our estates, and where our youths have been passed, is as familiar to us as the broad road to the holy city of Rome. A path, steep in truth, and dangerous but still such as a gallant steed with a steady rider on his back may descend, leads down the gulf that has startled Sadik. Wait but for the light of the moon, which will not tarry long behind those clouds, and the path will be seen straggling down the mountain’s side. Sadik, mind thee ! bear hard to the left, and let thy stirrup-iron graze the rock, and——”

Before he finished speaking, the clouds, driven by a violent wind that roared in the deep chasms and among the ilex groves of the mountains, passed away from the moon, whose broad bright face again cheered the travellers, and showed the path.

“Pardon—a pardon, my friends !” cried the cavalier of the silver eagle, as he gathered the reins in his hands to follow the swarthy leader, who, with all the care and dexterity of an accomplished

horseman, took the narrow, giddy way down the gulf—"a pardon for my hasty mood from thy breasts, and a prayer from mine. As those clouds from the moon, may every cloud be dispelled that would obscure the faith and honour of the Capeci!"

"And thus flee every cloud that would darken the fortunes of him we follow!" exclaimed Conrad and Marino Capeci in the same breath.

The troop slowly descended into the frightful hollow, whose overhanging precipices soon interrupted the rays of the moon. As down they went, deeper and deeper, darkness the most opaque enveloped them; and the savage scene might have represented the entrance into those regions of woe, "*non mai di tempo tinto*,"\* whilst the hoarse brawling of a stream far beneath them might have sounded in their ears like the turmoils and laments of the damned. The goodness of the horses, that gathered their legs close under them, and the skill of the riders, triumphed however, over every difficulty; and after several hair-breadth escapes, the whole party reached the bottom of the dell and the stony bed of the torrent without accident. Having waded through the waters, whose white foam could now and then be seen through that darkness, they almost immediately began to ascend by a path differing little from the one they had just achieved. The hardy, generous steeds toiled up the steep, grasping the inequalities of the rocks with their fore feet, as though they had been hands instead of hoofs, and as they emerged one by one from the line of deep shadow into the light of the moon, the hearts both of men and horses revived. Beyond the gulf they had now crossed, a broad, fair space of table-land lay before them, over which, after having given their steeds a short breathing time, they cantered with great glee. But this open country was soon traversed, and the troop again engaged in deep hollows, and narrow, tortuous paths, which seemed made only for the feet of the active goat or the wild chamois. The night, moreover, had become stormy: the clouds were more frequent and opaque than before, and the light of the

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\* Dante, *L' Inferno*.

moon, only half illuminating their way, made the precipices appear still deeper and more frightful than they were, to them and to their horses, which would frequently start on their narrow, span-broad path, as a sudden flash of light fell on some grotesquely shaped rock, or the bared roots of some mountain tree, or other half-developed object. Then, as rider and horse seemed about to flounder down the deep, black chasm, would be heard the quick, agitated voice of comrade and friend, exclaiming, "Have a care there! have a care! To the right! to the right! A steady hand on the rein!" And when the peril was past, the low murmured thanksgiving to the blessed Virgin and the Saints was uttered by lips that were bold but mortal, and might fear, without committing their character for valour, such dangers as those.\*

As the troop approached Manliano, a little town almost as wild as the mountain scenery among which it is placed, and which at that season of the night only betrayed its contiguity by the bark of numerous sheep dogs, the rolling clouds that had accumulated upon one another began to descend in torrents of rain. The evident object of the mysterious party was to avoid as much as possible the habitations of men; but this town occupied the whole of a narrow pass in the mountains, their only road. Manliano, through which they were thus obliged to go, like many of the borghi in the kingdom of Naples, in our own days, as well as then, is com-

\* Nicolai de Jamsilla, to whose most interesting chronicle we are indebted for this portion of the altogether romantic history of Manfred, and who seems to have been one of the companions of that Prince in the adventurous scenes we are describing, (a circumstance that throws so much interest over all his recital,) thus paints the horrors of the nightly journey:—

"Cum enim nox esset, Luna tamen lucente apparebant declivia montium, per quæ transitus erat, longè terribiliora, & profundiora quàm erant; & ad id loci quandoque perveniebatur in quo vel propter imminentis ruinæ formidinem, vel propter æris opacitatem, splendore lunæ per oppositionem aliquando deficiente, nulla spes eis inde exeundo remaneret, & certum quisque ibi suum periculum expectaret. Levigabatur sanè eis in illâ tenebrosâ periclitatione quadammodo timor, si ab equis descenderent, & eundo pedites timorem pro labore commutarent; magis enim propriis, quàm equorum suorum pedibus credebant viæ illius, immo ac dubitabilis peregrinationis leviorẽ quidem extimantes esse ruinam, si ex propriorum pedum lapsu forsitan caderent, quàm si sedentes in equis cum equorum ipsorum præcipatione corruerunt."—Nicolai de Jamsilla, Hist. vol. viii. Scriptores Rerum Italicarum.



posed of one long, winding, narrow street, without a single lateral issue from it. Its peaceful inhabitants were wrapped in sleep ; but when the cavalcade trod on its roughly-paved street, and the clattering of the horses' hoofs roused all the dogs to a tremendous chorus of barking, that sleep was broken, and men, women, and children, in such attire as they had on, came crowding to the low doors of the houses, to see what had happened. A cry of alarm was speedily communicated from dwelling to dwelling, and pikes and other arms were seen brandishing in the hands of the townsfolk. At these hostile signs, the Cavalier of the silver eagle put spurs to his horse, and cried out to those who preceded him to hasten their march ; for so narrow was the way, that two horses could with difficulty pass far abreast of each other. Before entering the town a short halt had been made for some sumpter mules, and these animals, that were now foremost of the train, on being goaded forward over the unequal stony pavement, rendered doubly slippery by the heavy rains, staggered and fell, and, with their baggage, completely blocked up the narrow street. At this critical moment, in the midst of a true scene of midnight confusion, and the barking of a host of dogs, and the halloeing of all the village, and the curses of the muleteers, the impetuous cavalier, who did not know the cause of the impediment—who could not move a step forward, but was caught, as in a trap—heard some of the men of Manliano, close at his bridle-rein, consulting whether it would not be expedient to arrest the convoy, to discover whether the fugitive Prince, the impious rebel to the will of Holy Church, were not among them. Nothing could well have been easier of execution, situated as they were. The Cavalier, whoever he was, or whatever might be his stake and interest in the game, was evidently affected to the very depth of his soul. His knees were unsteady on his horse's flanks, his head was bent forward to catch the words of the consultation, his whole countenance was troubled, and he breathed not at all, in his earnestness to listen, or his breath came thick and labouring, as he caught ill-omened words from the sturdy burghers ; but in a few minutes the fallen mules were again on their feet, the convoy moved onward, and the people of Man-

liano, who might have won silver and gold, and what might have been more precious in their eyes, the gratitude and the blessings of the Pope himself, did not attempt to obstruct them, but contented themselves with securing the gates of the little castle adjoining their village.\*

"A plague on these shepherds, and goatherds, and scurvy mountaineers!" quoth the Cavalier, as the troop, having fairly merged from Manliano, continued their route. "By Our Lady! they might have spoiled our game at the very first move. But, courage! a difficulty overcome is an augur of future success!"

"And it is so," said Conrad Capece, "because the good countenance, the prudence, the valour, or other qualities, which surmount that difficulty, are not subject to chances, and may do again what they have done before. A word—a short word of two syllables—uttered by one of our party, might have ruined us all."

"'Manfred' was that word; but it shall not ever be a name of ill omen," said the cavalier of the silver eagle, who was no other than the Suabian prince who bore that name, and was now a nightly wanderer and a fugitive. Whilst he makes his way across the Apennines, we may devote a few moments to the preceding chapters of his eventful history.

Manfred, Prince of Taranto, was the son of the Emperor Frederic II. and of the fair Marchioness of Lancia; and though his birth was illegitimate, he inherited the virtues and the talents of his father in a degree much superior to any of the princes of that family. The Emperor, who saw the merits of this fruit of an unlawful but dear connexion, legitimized him, and substituted Manfred for his other lawful sons, Conrad and Henry, as the heir of his various crowns, in case they should die without posterity. The valour of the warrior and the skill of the statesman interest us less than the passionate love of letters and the early refinement of Frederic II. and his favourite son Manfred. It was at that court that the literature of Italy may be said to have been cradled, and the foundations laid, of the rich and harmonious Italian language,

which, somewhat more than a century after, reached at once the maturity of its strength and beauty in the hands of the immortal Dante Alighieri. The first lisplings of the Ausonian muse were heard in the royal halls of Naples and Palermo, where the flower of Italy was invited by the elegant-minded Frederic. According to an ancient writer, "la gente che aveva bontade veniva a lui da tutte le parti: e l' uomo donava molto volentieri, e mostravi belli sembianti: e chi aveva alcuna speciale bontà a lui veniano; trovatori e belli parlatori;"\* and the names of these princes of the Suabian line are inseparably connected with the glory of those who were the very first to write in the vulgar Italian idiom. Moreover, what they admired and generously encouraged in others, they practised themselves. Frederic could find leisure in the midst of the cares that beset a crown, and the multifarious occupations of a troubled reign, to write poetry; a canzone of his, addressed to his mistress (perhaps the mother of Manfred), whom he declares to be so beautiful that no man could sing her merit, is still extant; and Matteo Spinelli, one of the earliest, if not the very first of the chroniclers who abandoned the Latin for Italian, informs us that Manfredi imitated his father's example; and that when in Apulia, and in the fine season of the year, this accomplished young prince was wont to stroll by night through the pleasant city of Barletta, on the shores of the Adriatic, singing catches and songs, and breathing the cool air; and with him went two Sicilian musicians, who were great poets.†

It is impossible for a mind humanized by literature and the elegances of modern times, to look back on this touching little picture of the old chronicler—this fair oasis in the desert of barbarism and brute violence,—without a glow of affectionate admiration for Manfred—of indignation at his persevering enemy, who interrupted, and finally destroyed, the gentle tendencies of his

\* *Cent' novelle antiche.* Nov. 20.

† "Che spesso la notte esciva per Barletta, cantando stramboti e canzoni; ed iva pigliando il fresco, e con esso ivano due musici Siciliani che erano grandi romanzatori."—*Chron. Matteo Spinelli.* Muratori, *Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*, vol. vii.

heart and intellect, and who, having deprived him of a crown he honoured, and a life he so well knew how to enjoy, would have condemned his name to eternal obloquy. This enemy was the Church of Rome, that sent his father Frederic in sorrow to the grave, in the year of our redemption one thousand two hundred and fifty; that continued its contest with his successor, Manfred's brother, Conrad; and when Conrad had died prematurely, four years afterwards, redoubled its hostility against Manfred, who assumed the reins of government, in the name of Conradin, the infant son of his brother. The Popes, whose implacable hatred to the Suabian line is but too well known, had gradually increased their pretensions to this fair kingdom, in the South of Italy, and the ambitious Innocent IV. now openly claimed Naples for himself, as forfeited to its feudal superior, the Holy See, declaring Manfred a usurper, an excommunicated rebel, a fratricide, and a monster stained with every crime. It has been made matter of historical doubt whether Manfred did not, from the very beginning, decide to appropriate to himself the crown of his infant nephew, whom his dying brother had recommended to his care; but it is pretty certain that, had it not been for his exertions, his address and bravery, there would have been no crown to dispose of, but that Sicily and Naples would have been added to the proud congeries of the Papal tiara. The beginning of his contest with the Pope was, however, unfavourable to Manfred: it was in vain that, seconding the instances of the Marquis of Hohemburg, the general of the German troops, bailli of the kingdom, and guardian of the young prince Conradin, he humbly represented to the Pope, that that infant, who was scarcely three years old, could not have committed any crime to merit the deprivation of his inheritance; that Conrad, his father, at the point of death, had left orders to his nearest of kindred, to reconcile him to the Church, on whatever conditions the Church herself might dictate; and that, in fine, Rome would never find a sovereign more submissive, more dependent on her, than Conradin, for whom he, his uncle Manfred, acted as Regent. Pope Innocent, who had successively made proffers of the Suabian's crown to several foreign princes, who were to acknowledge him as

their feudal superior, now determined to grasp it with his own hands, and to keep it to himself; and his arrogant reply to the ambassadors from the kingdom was, that, as the initiative of the business, he must at once be put in full possession of the states of the Two Sicilies; and that afterwards, if he found Conradin had any right to them, when that prince should attain the age of puberty, he would deliberate and see what grace he, as Pope, could accord to him.\* Nor was this answer an idle bravado; the spiritual chief of Christendom, the successor of the humble fisherman, whose duty it was to preach and to practise good-will and peace to all men, the holder of the keys of heaven and of hell, determined to wield the sword in a merely mortal quarrel, and for mortal and most unjustifiable aggrandizement. At the town of Anagni, while his partisans in the kingdom excited the people to revolt by representing to them how shameful it was that they should any longer submit to the government of Saracens† and Germans, and by other insidious means, the energetic old Pope assembled an army, which was composed of troops from the Guelph Republics of Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Marches of Ancona—of Genoese soldiers, raised by his potent relatives, the Counts of Fieschi, and of such Romans as interest or affection attached to the Papal banners. The Marquis of Hohemburg, discouraged by revolts in every one of the provinces, and by frequent conspiracies, renounced his share of the government, and Manfred was left alone to bear the burden, and the brunt of the coming tempest. To this tempest he was obliged to bow his head, and his proud temper submitted to numerous but useless humiliations. The Pope was aged—his death might change the course of affairs. Manfred saw few on whom he could depend: he issued orders that all the fortresses in the kingdom should open their gates to the Pontifical forces, and preceded by ambassadors, who represented that he regarded the Holy See as the natural protector of orphans and the feeble; that if Innocent had the wish

\* Nicolai de Jamsilla, *Historia*.

† “Fu accusato egli (Manfredi) in obbrobrio della Fede Cattolica, di preferire a’ Cristiani i Saraceni, valendosi de’ loro riti, e conversando con essi assai familiarmente.”—Gianonne. *Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli*, lib. xix.

to take possession of Conradin's inheritance, he had no design to oppose his views ; that he should only make a reservation of his nephew's and his own right ; and that he would be the first among the Apulians to show his respect and devotedness to the Church, he repaired to meet the Pope in person. Ceperano, a small town on the frontiers of the Roman and Neapolitan States, was the scene of this interview, and Manfred himself led the horse of the haughty Pontiff by the bridle, as he crossed the river Garigliano.

The Pope arrived, surrounded by all the exiles of the kingdom ; by all those who, by their intrigues, had troubled the administration, from the commencement of the reign of Frederic II. ; the San Severini, the De Morra, the D'Aquini, Borello d'Anglone, were seen near his person, and they studied to make Manfred feel all their insolence and all his humiliation. According to Matteo Spinelli, the San Severini refused the salutations of ordinary courtesy when they met him ; a legate of the Pontiff, exacted from all the Neapolitan barons the oath of fidelity to the Holy See, as if the kingdom had irrevocably devolved to it ; and still more, he presumed to demand the same oath from Manfred himself, while the Pope arbitrarily despoiled that Prince of a portion of his domains in his principality of Taranto, the investiture of which he gave to Borello d'Anglone, Manfred's bitterest enemy. This Borello had obtained favour from Manfred shortly after Frederic's death ; but he had buried it in oblivion, and only cherished the remembrance of his old hatred against the house of Suabia : he audaciously disputed the rights of the Prince, and endeavoured to make him feel he had become his equal, still more than to deprive him of his property. At the head of some soldiers, he took the route to Alesina, to take possession of that county, a feud of Manfred's. The Prince was then with the Pope at Teano : he learned that Berthold de Hohemburg, formerly his colleague, was approaching with an army to pay homage to the Pope ; and he went away with a brilliant retinue, to confer with the German before his arrival. He followed the Capuan road, the same which Borello d'Anglone had taken : the two escorts met ; embittered by a thousand preceding wrongs, they insulted each other and fought : Borello was

killed, against the will of the Prince, as his partisans assure us ; and in effect, though Manfred was son of the Emperor, and presumptive heir to the throne, it is not probable but that he must have felt, that, in thus disembarassing himself of such an enemy, he must throw himself into an extreme danger. The Pope summoned Manfred to appear before the tribunal of one of his nephews, to purge himself, if he could, of the alleged murder ; and at the same time he refused him a *salva-condotta* to repair to that tribunal without molestation ; on another side, the city of Capua seized the baggage of the Prince, and even sent troops to pursue him. Manfred shut himself up in Acerra, the Count of which was his near relation ; but already he perceived that he was shunned, like a man whose ruin was inevitably assured. Berthold de Hohemburg, who had approved his conduct, refused to have a conference with him ; and he uttered against the son of his master complaints which till now he had not even dreamed of making. Shortly after, the Marquis Lancia, Manfred's maternal uncle, had it intimated to him that he was not in safety in Acerra ; that his enemies would not delay to besiege it with superior forces ; and that if, as he had been summoned to do, he gave himself up, the Pope would throw him into prison, to condemn him subsequently to exile and confiscation, if not to death. One only way of salvation remained to the Prince ; it was, to traverse the kingdom ; to reach Luceria, in the province of the Capitanata ; to confide himself to the Saracens who inhabited that city ; and to awaken in them, if it was yet time, the affection they had always shown for his family. But Luceria was distant, and commanded by a creature of Berthold de Hohemburg, Giovanni Mauro, who had already made his submission to the Pope ; and to arrive at that city, Manfred had to cross a vast and inimical tract of country.\*

It was in the execution of this arduous design, that the Suabian Prince, at the hour and in the mode we have described, took his road across the wild mountains, where we must now rejoin him.

After the adventure of Manliano, the journey was prosecuted

\* Sismondi, *Hist. Rep. Ital.* chap. xviii

without any remarkable event or accident for some hours. The sun of a fine day arose, the passes of the mountains they threaded were less difficult, with light to guide their steps ; and the free air of those high lands, embalmed with the wild thyme and other aromatic plants, that lend verdure, here and there, to the bare tops of the Apennines ; and the genial warmth that dispelled the chill of the preceding night, and dried their drenched garments, served to revive the spirits of all the party. Manfred rode on, at times conversing with the brothers Capeci, and at others with Sadik the Moor, whose replies were always terse and abrupt ; and, even when full of the most friendly feeling, delivered in a gruff tone of voice, that seemed anything rather than friendly.

"I tell thee again, Prince," said he, after a long pause, "that thou may'st rely on the Saracens of Luceria, be the mood of their governor what it will ! What is the Pope of Rome to the sons of the Prophet ? and what prince or chieftain can do for them what thine house of Suabia has done for them ? Or tell me, what promises for the future can cancel the obligations of the past, or obliterate from grateful hearts the benefits conferred by thy illustrious father, thy brother, and thyself ? No ! the Saracens will not forget that when they were overpowered by numbers in Sicily, which was once the fair portion of the children of the Prophet, and when their enemies would fain have slaughtered them to a man, thy sire, the great Frederic, came forward with mercy on his lips, and liberality in his hands, and assigned them, instead of the regions of the grave, the fertile plains of Capitanata that lie around Luceria, and this only on the honourable condition that they should serve him in his wars.\* In the course of thirty years since their establishment, the Angel of Death has smitten many, but many still survive who were present, and part to the solemn com-



\* This Mahometan colony, which, according to some authorities, could furnish the tolerant and enlightened sovereign with as many as twenty thousand fighting men, was formed in 1223 ; and somewhat more than twenty years after, Frederic induced the rest of the Saracens in Sicily to translocate on the same conditions. The second colony was established at Nocera, a pleasant town, that is still called Nocera de' Pagani, between Naples and Salerno.



pact ; and their children, and their children's children, are inseparably bound to the son of Frederic !”

“It is most true, Sadik,” said Manfred, “nor is there a breath of complaint to be raised against thy brethren, who have done their duty as faithful men, and have reaped no little glory under the banners of Suabia !”—“Ay, glory ! glory and gain ! I charged among the ten thousand Saracens that followed thy sire at Corte Nuovo,” cried Sadik, while his eye glowed redly, and his right hand waved his crooked scimitar, as if he were again on the verge of attack ; “my hand was the first laid upon the Carroccio of Milan ; and after the battle it was filled with gold : it is older now, but will not be weak when thou biddest me strike thy foes !” “I am content, Sadik—confident in thee and thine ; and will at once and openly present myself to the Saracens of Luceria,” was the reply of Prince Manfred, who reined in his steed until the two noble brothers again came up with him.

“I see there, on the mountain's side—on a projecting rock, a fair castle looking down a deep ravine, and over the frothing waters of a descending stream—even such as thy castle of Atripalda\* hath been described to me,” said the Prince to the barons.

“And it is even our home,” replied Marino Capece ; “and it will henceforth be more honoured and dearer in our eyes from having received and entertained the Prince Manfred, our most royal master.”

In less than half an hour the travellers stood before the gates of this castle of Atripalda, whose ruins are still to be seen in the neighbourhood of the large town of Avellino. The iron-bound gates gladly revolved on their hinges, at the summons of the feudal lords ; the vassals within paid their homage, as to a sovereign, to the fugitive Prince ; and Manfred, after much fatigue and some danger, was at liberty to repose awhile in a place certainly safe from his implacable enemies.

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\* Atripalda, in the neighbourhood of the large and flourishing town of Avellino, is one of the most picturesque spots of the picturesque kingdom of Naples. The last time I was there (in 1825) a magnificent road had just been finished, which run through the mountains to Salerno and the sea.

Before the hour of noon, the tables were laid in the banqueting hall of Atripalda. To pay a proper respect to their distinguished guest, the hospitality and ingenuity of the noble brothers were exhausted; all the elegances of their establishment were put in requisition; but a common burgher of the present day would smile at the rusticity of a baronial dinner given to royalty in the thirteenth century. The massy tables, made of the wild chesnut-trees that grew so luxuriantly in that neighbourhood, boasted no table-cloth or covering; the dishes were served up in huge tureens of wood, or on platters of the same material; the knives on the board seemed rather instruments of warfare than of refection; the spoons were of boxwood; and of forks there were none in the Castle of Atripalda, nor anywhere else, at the period.

On Manfred's entering the dinner-hall, the two Signors Capeci presented each his wife; and so little had the spirit of gallantry as yet penetrated into these countries, that his chronicler and companion, Jamsilla, informs us that these ladies, noble as they were, considered themselves most highly honoured by the son of an emperor deigning to sit by their sides at their table, and partake of their repast. "However," adds the historian of his deeds, "the prince could do this without committing himself; for such is the prerogative of ladies, that one may, without degrading oneself, render them the greatest honours, whilst it would not become one to render similar homages to men the most puissant.

The circumstances of the times, the growing numbers and activity of his enemies, and his imminent danger, did not long permit Manfred to indulge in the pleasures of repose and feasting, and the society of ladies, to which that civilized prince never seems to have been averse. Taking leave of his noble hosts, who had so ably conducted him across the mountains through the midst of his foes, and so hospitably entertained him, he continued his route by Guardia de' Lombardi, Bisaccio, and Bimio. He was now on his own feudal estates, which he held as Prince of Taranto, independently of any pretension to the government of the kingdom of the Sicilies, either as guardian to his nephew, or as king himself; he was in the midst of his own vassals; but whatever

might be their devotion to him, they assured him that he could not long dwell among them in safety, as all the surrounding towns had declared for the Pope and the Guelphs. To stay was not among his intentions. Every thing depended on the rapidity of his movements; and he rode on by the town of Melfi, which closed its gates against him, to Ascoli, where the people massacred a governor devoted to his interests, on his approach. At Venosa he was received with more respect; but shortly after his entrance into that town, the citizens intimated to him that the Guelphs threatened it with a siege, it was not in a state to resist, and that he could not be safe there even for a few hours.

"I am banded about in a most unprincely guise; but Luceria is now at hand, and, prove but my Saracens true, the banners of Suabia, shall again float on the walls of all these towns, despite of traitors and cowards," said Manfred, fondly referring, as he had so often and so naturally done, to his last and only hope.

If the route of the Prince had hitherto been beset by dangers, the portion that was still before him to perform, though not many miles in distance, was exposed to a thousand perils, for it lay between the large towns of Ascoli and Foggia, which were not only inimical to him, but filled with the troops of the Pope, excursive parties of which he might meet at every step; nor, as had been the case in the earlier part of his journey, did the nature of the country offer the means of secrecy and concealment; for, instead of wild mountains and deep ravines, the country between Venosa and Luceria was nearly all open and flat—a segment of the vast semicircle of the Apulian plain, across whose unbroken surface the eye can wander unobstructed as over the sandy desert of Arabia, or the tranquil expanse of the Mediterranean Sea. To a good eye, even a flock of sheep on those dead flats is visible at the distance of miles—it was next to impossible that a troop of horse should pass them unobserved, even by night. Manfred, therefore, who in every crisis of his life, and even at later years, when the sanguine buoyancy of youth was past, seems to have been possessed of a personal courage ever ready, and of the promptest decision of character, determined here to separate

himself from his escort, which he sent by a circuitous route towards the town of Spinazzola, whilst he himself, accompanied only by the master of the hunt of his father the Emperor Frederic, by the Moor Sadik, and a squire, took the open and direct road across the plain to Luceria. But, as he issued silently from the gates of Venosa, a few of his devoted friends discovered the Prince, and followed him—he had not the heart to insult their affections and send them back.\* It was a dark and dreary November night, and the little party, involved in the contingencies of a desperate fortune, had scarcely quitted the walls of the town—the last that might be friendly to them—when the rain began to descend in torrents all but tropical, and increased the darkness and difficulty of the way. In those days, as indeed in the present, no regular beaten roads traverse the solitudes of the Apulian flat, but the traveller shapes his course where he lists, over stunted sward, or naked sand. With no marked line to guide them, the Prince and his companions knew not whither they were going, and might apprehend that, instead of approaching Luceria, they might so deviate as to find themselves, on the return of light, in the vicinity and within ken of their implacable enemies. As thus they went on in bewildering darkness and drenching rain, cheered with the hoarse murmurs of distant thunder, they of a sudden caught the sound of voices. They reined in their horses and listened—the voices were close to them—every man laid his hand on his sword, thinking the next moment might see him in contact with the Papal soldiers—but presently a barking of sheep-dogs was heard mingling with the voices, and they understood they had approached a tent or hut of shepherds, who are accustomed in the winter season of the year to descend from the rude and desolate mountains of the Abruzzi, and the province of Basilicata, to pasture their flocks in the milder regions of the Apulian plain. They rode on in the direction whence those sounds proceeded; and as they spoke not, and their horses' hoofs made no noise on the soft sward,

\* Nicolai de Jamsilla.

they reached a low, long hut, that was just visible in the dim obscure, rising above the surface of the dreary flat, without the shepherds within having any notice of their approach.

"We will stay and ask these honest fellows what part of this beaconless, pathless desert we have wandered to," said Manfred.

At the sound of his "*Hilloa!*" the voices in the hut ceased, and it was not till several seconds, and after he had repeated his summons, that a small window in the rude pastoral edifice was opened, and an old shepherd, with a huge iron cresset in his hand, the rays of which enlivened the hearts of the nightly wanderers, reconnoitred the party, and with a trembling voice demanded what they wanted in such a place and at such a season.

"Fear nothing, good keeper of sheep," said Manfred; "we are peaceful travellers from Venosa, and would only know of thee whether we have kept the road to Luceria."

"To Luceria!—*Madonna mia!* no!—you have come too far to the south—you must keep north—to the left of the rivulet yonder—and then keeping the peaks of Mount Vultur in your eye, now and then——"

"But who can tell north from south, or see rivulet or mountain, in a pitchy night like this?" interrupted the Prince.

"If the night be so dark—and—*Saint Martin!* how it rains!—had you not better shelter and dry yourselves here awhile?—the hut of a shepherd of the Abruzzi is a humble place, but its door is never shut to the honest wayfarer," replied the old man.

"My honest friend! we will even accept your invitation until the weather clears a little," said Manfred, dismounting from his drooping steed; and then turning to his slender suite, he whispered "Come, comrades! follow your houseless Prince to this rustic cabin—he will yet live to give you better shelter in the royal halls of his fathers!"

The next moment the door of the hut was unbarred; and deafened by the barking of the huge white sheep dogs, whom their masters endeavoured to silence, the Prince and his few followers entered an abode of pastoral and most primitive appearance. Along the walls of a low, thatch-covered hut were hung sheepskins,

the heads and hides of the marauding wolf, crooks, and a few more offensive weapons ; on the earthen floor were spread other sheepskins, on which some of the shepherds were taking their sound sleep—the enviable sleep of labour and lowly contentment ;—in the centre of the apartment blazed a wood fire, that, with the addition of an iron lamp, grotesquely and partially illuminated the scene ;—on the fire was a vast culinary vessel, on whose contents a group of shepherds, seated in a friendly circle, were making their supper. These men were all clad in sheepskins, and their raven black hair fell in long loose curls over their shoulders, and shaded their bronzed features ; but though rustic and hirsute as men could well be in aspect, they were courteous in manner ; they made room by the fire for the dripping travellers, and kindly pressed them to partake of their simple repast.\* As the Prince dried his humble and soiled attire by the blazing hearth, he could not help feeling, that though this pastoral scene did not much resemble the classical pictures of antiquity which his father's learned secretary, Pietro delle Vigne, had often read to him in his youth from the Latin poets, yet it was still a scene of interest and happiness ; nor did he avoid, as most hearts will not at certain periods of life, however ambitious be that life's career—a hope,—a wish—to be able to forego farther turmoil, and to find the peace of men in humble destinies.

Manfred was roused from some such dream as this, by the faithful master of the hunt, who told him the night had somewhat cleared, and that now he could conduct his master with certainty towards Luceria—for much of his life had been spent among those wilds, and, with but a little light to guide him, he could find his way to any given spot. After taking a kind farewell of the hospitable shepherds, the nocturnal party remounted their horses and continued their journey.

As they went over the wide plain, that seemed to have no limits,

\* This scene has been drawn from the recollections of a night passed with some shepherds of the Abruzzi, as far back as the year 1817, and on the same spot. I had been visiting the field of Cannæ, and the slight remains of that ancient town.

the rain still continued to drench them at intervals ; but they could see their way, and depend on the huntsman's guidance ; and the important interests that occupied their minds rendered them almost insensible to the discomforts of the body. After some hours travelling, however, the night became more stormy, the heavens darker than ever, and the rain again descended in fearful torrents, and made the sward over which they were riding, so slippery that they could scarcely keep their horses on their legs. The master of the hunt, in this dilemma, addressed the Prince. "Near the spot where we now are," said he, "there is a hunting-seat built by thy royal father, and abandoned since his death ; there of a certainty we shall find no human being, and we had better tarry there ; for thou canst not present thyself at Luceria, even if I could find my way through this palpable obscurity, in the middle of the night, when friend cannot be distinguished from foe, nor Saracen from Italian."

"Right," replied Manfred ; "find the place, and we will shelter in it as best we can, until the peep of day !" But to find the royal *venerie* on that wild dark plain was no easy task ; the party rode round and round for some time without coming upon it, and it was entirely the work of chance, that at last the foremost of the troop rode his horse's head against its gate. The master of the hunt, who heaved a sigh at the desolate state of a place where in the days of the late Emperor he had passed so many joyous nights, after the glorious hunts of the day on the free plains of Apulia, opened the door and struck a light, to usher in that kind master's persecuted and fugitive son. The party led their fatigued horses to some stabling that still retained its roof, and then met together in the deserted hall of the hunting-seat, in a plight perfectly in accordance with the wretchedness of the building. It wanted yet some two or three long hours of dawn ; they were shivering from the effects of wet and cold ; and all hands, the Prince as well as his friends, speedily employed themselves in making a fire. For this purpose they tore down the doors and the wood-work of the windows, the only combustible materials they could find there, and with these they kindled so bright and

cheerful a blaze, that, according to his chronicler and companion, Jamsilla, its reflection spread far over the dark plain, and could be distinguished by its magnitude and brilliancy, even at the distant towns of Foggia and Troja; and the Prince, careless for the moment of the possibility of its attracting his foes to the spot, gaily declared, as he rubbed his hands in its heat, that it was "a right royal fire!" By this fire, which was the only thing of royalty left to the Prince in his hard fortunes, he and his companions dried their clothes, and waited with no small degree of impatience, after the first feelings of the comfort its blaze afforded had abated, for the dawn of that day which was to decide the fate of their important enterprise.

With the very first faint glimpse of that dawn the party mounted their horses and took the road to Luceria, which, soon as the morning light spread, showed itself on the summit of a fair hill, beyond the verge of the Apulian plain, at a very inconsiderable distance before them.

"Now here, my friends, we must part; I go forward and you remain here," said the Prince, pointing to a little hollow in the plain, where his feeble escort might lie unobserved. "Not a word of remonstrance!" continued he, as he saw some of them about to protest against their separation; "it is my command, my prayer, I should say, that it be thus. I shall only take my gallant huntsman here, my faithful Sadik, and this gentle squire; should my enterprise fail, we are victims enough. Your number, added to us would be rather too weak to take Luceria by storm; so rest ye here, my generous comrades, in safety; and if before the hour of noon you receive not my invitation to join me in yon fair city, you must conclude that Manfred has fallen, and quietly repair to your homes."

"Then, if such is thy will, Heaven speed thee! Heaven speed Prince Manfred!" exclaimed his followers; several of them could not avoid shedding tears at this parting, and with difficulty remained where they were, in a place of safety, when they saw him ride hastily on towards the town.

During the events we have related, the governor of Luceria,



Giovanni Mauro, the creature, at the same time, of the Marquis of Hohemburg, had departed from that important fortress to render his homage to the Pope, and Marchisio, his lieutenant, commanded in his absence. The garrison consisted of three hundred German, and a thousand Saracen soldiers. A company of the latter, stationed on the ramparts, were the first to see the four horsemen rapidly advancing from the plain ; and when Manfred and his attendants climbed the hill, and stood before one of the gates of the city, they watched him, in increased numbers, from those ramparts, and from a gallery that crossed the fortified gateway. Anon, a warder challenged the Prince.

"Now is the decisive moment !" cried Manfred, with a flush on his cheek. "Sadik, it is for thee to speak, and crowns, and my life, depend upon the effect of thy words !"

"God is great !" was the only reply of the dusky Moor, who passed a few yards in advance of the Prince, and addressed the Saracens on the walls in the Arabic idiom.

"Behold your lord and prince, the son of the Emperor Frederic, your benefactor, who comes, according to your desire, to place himself in your hands ! Open then, your gates to him ! he relies on your loyalty !"\*

There was silence ; Manfred raised his helmet from his forehead and looked eloquence. But the silence was of short duration ; at the words of Sadik, at the mention of Frederic and of his son, the hearts of the Saracens glowed with enthusiasm, and they presently exclaimed with one voice, and one transport of joy, "Let him enter, let him come in, before the Governor learn his arrival ! and we answer for his safety !"

All the keys of the gates of Luceria were at the residence of the Governor Marchisio, who was jealously awake to the importance of the charge confided to him by Giovanni Mauro ; but under the gate before which Manfred stood, there was a gulley, or narrow passage for the water. One of the Saracens pointed to that aper-

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\* "En dominus vester Princeps filius Imperatoris juxta desiderium vestrum ad vos venit : aperite ergo sibi portas, et ipsum recipite in civitate, sicut jam pridem cum magna bona vestra liberalitate promisistis.—*Nicolai de Jamsilla.*

ture ; and the prompt and bold Prince, throwing himself from his horse, crouched on his hands and knees to creep through that filthy channel.

"We will not suffer this," said the Saracens, touched to the heart's core by the humiliation of Manfred. "No ! never let it be said that we let our Prince enter his city in so shameful a manner ! Let us break open the gates, and give him the ingress that becomes a prince !"\* and while they spoke, they rushed to act.

"Is my royal master satisfied now of the fidelity of his Saracens?" inquired Sadik, pointing in the next minute to the revolving gate, which the united strength of the soldiers within had burst open.

The Prince was not allowed time for reply. The Saracens rushed out, raised him in their arms, and carried him in triumph towards the palace of Luceria.

The effect, the full success of his presenting himself, was so much more sudden than he could have contemplated in his most sanguine mood, that Manfred became confused, and he could scarcely understand where he was, when he saw the Governor Marchisio advancing with his guard against him. The sight recalled him to his senses, and roused his innate valour ; but there was no field for its display ; his triumph was to be a bloodless one, and complete as bloodless.

"Down from your horses ! prostrate yourselves at the feet of your Prince—the son of your Emperor," cried the Saracens with voices of thunder. The Governor turned pale and trembled, and threw himself to the ground ; his guards followed his example, and bending their knees, they all took the oath of fidelity to Prince Manfred.

"In this manner," according to the historians of the time, "did Manfred rise from a muddy ditch to the throne, for the whole revolution was comprised in this event. Luceria was a town so strong, and so perfectly sheltered from all popular movements, that the last sovereigns had chosen it for the receptacle of their archives and their treasures." With the money of which he obtained posses-

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\* "Namquid, ferendum est, ut Dominus noster, ita viliter civitatem intret ? Effragamus igitur portas, ut ingrediatur, sicut principem decet."—*Id.*

sion, he saw himself at once able to prosecute the war, and defeat the unjust enterprises of the Pope ; and this, after inviting his devoted followers from the hollow in the plain, and feasting awhile in the royal halls of Luceria, Manfred prepared to do.

Beyond the modern town of Caserta, and on the edge of a mountain that looks along the beautiful valley of Mattaloni, the traveller may have observed the picturesque ruins of a feudal castle : only two dilapidated round towers, and a fringe of rugged wall remain ; but there are two or three stone cottages, built of the materials of the nobler building ; and the people still call the place "Caserta Vecchia," or the old town. At the period of our story, or in the middle of the thirteenth century (and indeed long after), the only town of Caserta was on that mountain ; and the Count of Caserta, one of the most powerful of the barons of the kingdom, habitually resided in that castle. On a beautiful evening of autumn, a knight and a lady sat in a bower in the northern tower of the fortress, which commanded a magnificent view of the deep valley that winds away towards the towns of St. Agata di Goti, Montesarchio, and Benevento ; of the reverse of the grand mountain mass of Taburno ; and of numerous bosky dells and wooded hill-sides, whose trees and plants, save the perennial Italian pine, and the sweet unchangeable myrtle, all wore the softened, sere, mellow hues of the season. The noble couple had been gazing over the scene, which the setting sun invested with a glorious atmosphere of purple, saffron, and gold, and were now conversing together in a subdued tone of voice, such as is appropriated to the expression of the kindest feelings—and of love. They sat close together, and the lady's hand was in the cavalier's. Yet they were no pair of youthful lovers ; the knight appearing to be a man "*nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*,"\* and the fair one of about the same age. They might be husband and wife, whose tender affection for each another had not been cooled by accidents or time ; but on

looking in their faces, the strong likeness they bore to each other forbade such a thought; the lady indeed, was but the softened reflection of the knight in feature and expression; the resemblance held in demeanour and gesture, and every movement; and as to her voice, it seemed but the melodized echo of his. In fine, they were brother and sister; they loved each other with the tenderest affection, and what was a beauty in their lives, and a virtue, was at the same time the source of the greatest pleasure either could enjoy. "Thou art somewhat sad to-day, my brother," said the dame, after a short, abstracted silence on the part of the cavalier; "prithee what aileth thee? I cannot see thee thus, and not feel wretched!"

"'Tis but a momentary depression of spirits," replied the knight: "I may have sat too long this morning at the council board, or——"

"Discovered some new plot against thy life, some new manœuvre of thy restless enemies," anxiously interrupted the lady. "Oh! my brother! that thou hadst never soared so high! that thou hadst even now a humbler station! but tell me what it is that troubleth thee!"

"Nothing, sweet sister! indeed nothing ails me but one of those fits of depression which fall on the strongest and most sanguine of us, after long continued mental labour and excitement."

"No, my brother! it is something more than that! I have too often seen thee in that state not to distinguish between it and any other: thou art languid then, but not irritable; thy eye-lids droop then over their balls, but thine eyes do not glare and redden as I have seen them sometimes this evening. "Wilt tell me what has happened? There! now, they flash, as thine eyes never do save when thou art moved by some dreadful wrong!"

The cavalier rose from the lady's side and paced the bower with hasty steps, muttering to himself, "No! I cannot tell the horrid secret, I cannot pronounce the detestable words; and if I could, they would kill her!"

The lady also arose. She followed her brother up and down the bower, watching his moving lips, but not distinguishing what they

murmured. When he stopped in the recess of one of the windows, she kindly approached him, and clasping one of his hands in both of hers, said in a voice of thrilling affectionateness, "There, pardon me, my brother, if I have wakened some painful thought : I will not repeat my demand if it hurt thee thus ; but thou hast been wont to have so few, so very few secrets with me——"

"None, my sister," replied the cavalier, "none but this !"

"Well, keep it then," said the lady, "and I will only pray that it bode thee no evil." She returned to her seat, where, taking up a lute, and fixing her large, affectionate, and still beautiful eyes on the cavalier, she played and sang, until serenity was restored to his expressive countenance, and he came and sat again by her side. "'Tis thy turn now, my brother," smilingly said the dame, when she saw her music had produced its effect ; "thy voice hath not yet lost its sweetness : thou canst still rhyme a little to thy fond sister : there, take the lute !"

The cavalier took the instrument, and after a short prelude, sang—

I've seen the friends of early youth  
Desert me in the hour of need ;  
I've known my loved one mock at truth,—  
A brother cause my heart to bleed.

But thou, sweet sister, never yet  
Hast caused one pang within my breast ;  
Ne'er utter'd word I would forget,  
Or given aught save bliss and rest !

Then oh, sweet sister ! still to thee  
In joy and grief must I repair :  
Without thee, joy would cease to be ;—  
Without thee, grief would be despair !

"Thanks, gentle brother, thanks," said the dame, taking the lute from the cavalier with one hand, and laying her other on his arm ; "and, prithee, dost thou not feel that the tones of music and the recurrence to thine early pursuits of poetry, and to thine early affections, hath tranquillized thy spirit ?"

"It has ever been thus, my sweet sister !" replied the cavalier, "and, oh ! may it be so to the end of my life. I would go down

to the grave with my passion for polite literature unimpaired, with my affections all warm about my heart. My foes declare me a monster to the world, did a monster ever feel as I do? but, by Heavens! of the best of my feelings they make a crime, my affections——!" He suddenly interrupted himself, he looked as though he dreaded he had said too much, and rose and again paced the quiet bower with agitated steps and glaring eyes.

"What! again troubled, my brother! Oh this is too, too much." The dame seized the hand of the cavalier, which trembled in hers. "Have I lost my influence over thee? do my words of peace and love so soon fail in their effect? does thy fond sister——?"

"'Tis for thee that I feel thus; for my——" interrupted the cavalier, who again checked his speech, and trembled at what he had said.

"For me, this perturbation? Then, brother, let me know that dread secret, which can give thee anguish and trouble in her who hitherto hath given thee nought but comfort:—I must, I will know what agitates thee thus!"

"Alas! thou wilt know too soon—but I cannot tell it thee."

"Then am I unhappy indeed!" said the dame; and she threw herself on the cavalier's neck and wept in silence.

Whilst they were in this position, the knight's cheek reclining against the tear-washed face of the lady, his manly arm supporting her elegant figure, and his sweet tongue whispering words of consolation, the door of the apartment suddenly flew open, and the Count of Caserta, the lord of the castle, entered with hasty steps.

"How! here, my Lord—here at a moment when such weighty affairs are in agitation, and so much is to be done?" said the Baron, addressing the brother of his wife in a peculiar tone of voice, which seemed to move the cavalier in an extraordinary degree.

The knight gazed on the intruding noble, and from what he saw on his countenance, added to the manner of his entering the bower, and his manner of speaking, he was induced to say to himself, "He has it already—the dread secret—the horrid calumny mine enemies are circulating have already reached Caserta's ears, and he does me the cruel injustice to believe them!"

"And, may I ask, why thus in tears? What this means, my Lady?" demanded the Count of Caserta.

"Is it the first time, my Lord, you have seen *me* weep for my brother's vicissitudes, and the never-ceasing plots of his enemies?—hast thou not wept with me?—And now that I know treachery and remorseless hate encompass him—and he hides from me a secret which regards me——"

"Ha! regards thee!" interrupted the Count of Caserta, with an expression of dreadful suspicion, and a glance at his wife that seemed as if it would read her inmost soul; "then that secret must regard me also!—My Lord, may I ask a revelation from thee?" and he fixed his large and heavy eyes on the cavalier, who took him by the arm and led him to the deep recess of one of the windows.

"Caserta!" said the knight in an under-tone of voice, "am I to conclude from thy agitation, that the infernal aspersions on my character, which I would conceal from my sister, whom they would kill, are already familiar to thine ear?—am I to believe that thou believest my enemies, and art ready to join them, adding another traitor to the list?"

The Count made an effort—he recovered the tranquillity of his countenance, ere he replied: "My Lord, I know no secrets: I have no complaint—no agitation, but what is created by finding thee here parleying with my wife, when thou shouldst be at the assembly of the barons at Benevento!"

"Caserta," said the knight, "it may be a weakness, but it is an old one—I trust not an unamiable one. I have embarked on no expedition or enterprise without first seeing my dear sister; and I have yet to find that her affectionate soothings and caresses have either stupified my head in council, or weakened my arm in battle. I am on my road to Benevento, whither I expect to meet you on the morrow; but tell me, meanwhile, by the honour of chivalry, that you have really no new tale against me! I cannot, if thou hast not heard it, harrow up thy soul and mine by repeating it; but if thou hast been wounded by the accursed accusation, tell me, that I may explain the whence and why it came."

"I have heard no new tale, nor will I demand thine harrowing secret," said the Count, with composed feature and voice; "but I am hurt at thy suspicions of my loyalty to thee, and would have thee retract them."

"If I ever had such, I do most fully," said the cavalier, giving his hand in the frankest manner to Caserta, who turned away with a friendly farewell on his tongue, but the unobserved expression of a demon of hatred on his dark countenance.

"Well! hast thou had that confidence in my lord thou couldst not have in me? Hast thou told him thy secret?" inquired the lady, who sat facing the window where the whispered colloquy had taken place, with her eyes still suffused with tears.

"It hath been told to him no more than to thee," replied the cavalier; "but let us speak of it no more; and now farewell! for the moon, that will light me across these mountains to Benevento, is rising."

"Farewell, my brother!" said the dame, embracing him most affectionately; "farewell! May the saints of heaven be thy guides! mayest thou triumph over all thy difficulties! But, be thy fortunes what they may, thy sister's love will never be less than it has been, and now is! Farewell, my Manfred!"

And it was Manfred, the Emperor Frederic's son, whom we have seen as a fugitive prince, a nightly wanderer, and a fortunate adventurer, but who was now the monarch of the Two Sicilies, that quitted his sister's embrace not without a tear, and with a noways royal retinue—for the adventurous spirit of his youth, his disregard of personal danger, and a romantic cast of character, were still his—took his way from the Castle of Caserta, and, crossing the narrow valley of Mattaloni, soon ascended the opposite mountains. He rode on as we have seen him before, with the faithful Moor, Sadik, at the head of his little troop; but the fifteen years that had passed since the night of his departure from Acerra for Luceria had left strong markings of their iron fingers both on lord and squire. To the dusky Moor, who now rode less erect on his saddle, and whose eyes had lost much of their fire, they had brought old age; and though to the Prince they had only given the prime of man-



hood, the wearing cares with which they had been accompanied had wrinkled his handsome countenance and tinged his nut-brown flowing hair, while his heart was more blighted than his hair.\*

The season, the night, the moon, the scenery of the mountains, which were not distant from those he had traversed in his flight to Luceria, all brought vividly to his mind the feelings of the past; and Manfred could not help comparing his present situation to that of fifteen years before. Then, he was bound on an expedition of peril, on which his fortunes, his life, depended; now, he was in possession of more than all he could hope for at that period; but the same powerful enemy, the Church of Rome, that then thirsted for the blood of the fugitive, was now as thirsty as ever for the blood of the monarch. The anguish of losing is greater than that of never gaining; and yet his heart had felt the insignificance, the valuelessness, as far as happiness was concerned, of the splendid crowns that decorated his brow; the sceptre, in perspective a glorious branch of palm and of gold, had turned, in his hand, to a biting, envenomed serpent—but he could not relinquish it. No! he would die, or retain that, all that, which, though once so dear, had now palled on his appetite. And there were other things, and worse, that had happened in those fifteen years: boundless faith and confidence in others had given way to mistrust and diffidence; and the springs of hope had been relaxed by the heart's repeated disappointments. He had indeed, in fact as well as in poetry, seen the desertion of the ardent friends of his youth; he had arrived at that melancholy, withering point, when men make it a matter of calculation as to how far the interest of such or such an individual will be in accordance with truth, and fidelity, and good-will to themselves; and he experienced in his own bosom a growing coldness and a disability for those virtues which he had formerly practised as if by instinct. He sometimes, however, felt that he could give up "principalities and powers,"—a kingdom among the fairest of the earth—for a return of those generous

\* "And my heart is as grey as my hair!"  
*Lord Byron's verses to Lady Blessington.*

sentiments which had once shed a halo of glory and joyfulness around him ; and, in truth, they were worth the sacrifice of all his rich states, from the mountain boundary of the Abruzzi to the Straits of Messina, with the sunny island of Sicily beyond those narrow seas !

After obtaining possession of Luceria, and the faithful troops and the treasures it contained, the progress of Manfred was almost as rapid as the scenes of a drama.

The Marquis of Hohemburg had advanced with a Guelph army as far as the city of Foggia ; whilst the Cardinal Guglielmo, the Pope's nephew, had taken possession of Troja with an army still more formidable. They were both confounded with the intelligence which presently reached their ears, that Manfred, but now a fugitive, had sent to demand the royal tribute from those two towns and all the places in their neighbourhood. The Marquis, who had been the colleague of Manfred, but had been gained over by the Pope, felt his respect return with the rising fortunes of the Prince, and even sent him a present of clothes, of which the chronicler informs us he had mighty need, for Manfred had nothing with him but his good armour and his warrior's cloak. The Guelphs, who had denounced the Suabian as an excommunicated wretch, whom not even the humblest peasant of Christendom could have contact with, now saw themselves obliged to open negotiations with him ; and for this purpose the Marquis of Hohemburg joined the Cardinal Guglielmo at Troja. Manfred knew how insidious were all the measures emanating from his remorseless enemies, and he was on his guard. While these negotiations were pending, the Marquis Oddo, brother of the Marquis of Hohemburg, made an incursion, with part of the Guelph troops from Foggia, into the territory of Luceria, and while he was foraging there, Manfred came suddenly upon him, gave him a complete overthrow, and obliged him to flee to the city of Canosa, at the other extremity of the Apulian plain. The fortunate Prince next marched against Foggia, which he took after a combat of two hours. The Cardinal-nephew spared him the trouble of a battle ; for, no sooner did the news of his successes reach Troja,

than the Papal army, overcome by a general panic, took to flight, and abandoned the provinces. The two Guelph generals, the brother Marquises, were not long in following the Cardinal ; and when they reached Naples, where they might have dreaded the reproaches of the intrepid and impetuous Innocent IV., that pontiff had ceased to breathe. The Pope's successor, Alexander IV., had not the courage, the determination and talents, requisite to sustain the Guelph cause in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Manfred's partisans triumphed over their opponents both in Calabria and the Island of Sicily ; he, in person, pressed the rebels of Apulia and the Terra di Lavoro ; and though his armies were always much inferior in number to those of the Pope or his legates, he made up for this inferiority by rare military talents : he displayed at the same time all the chivalrous virtues which were now beginning to soften the barbarous asperities of the middle ages ; and practised an amiable gallantry, which gained the hearts of all his subjects. In the tent and on the field, he loved to have men of wit and literary acquirements about him ; and in the seasons of repose, his court became more distinguished for the urbanities of society, and the elegance of civilization, than even that of his father, the Emperor Frederic, had been. His enemy, the Church of Rome, though arrogating to itself a sacred, if not a divine character, in the bloody contest for earthly dominion, never hesitated to stoop to the basest treachery and falsehood. Twice did Manfred, relying on the Churchmen's words, accord favourable capitulations to the Pope's legates ; twice did they violate the truce mercifully accorded to them ; but twice did the Suabian Prince punish their bad faith by brilliant victories : and two years after the death of Innocent IV., he had recovered every inch of the kingdom which that pontiff had invaded, and would have attached for ever to the See of Rome.

Manfred might at once have ascended the throne of those states which he had won by his arms ; but he contented himself with the modest title of Regent, and governed in the name of his young nephew Conradin until four years after, when, being in Sicily, news reached him that Conradin had died in Germany. By some, he

is supposed to have been the author of that false rumour,\*—others admire his already long abstinence; but no one will be surprised, that when the bishops, and the signiors, and barons of his states, solemnly prayed him to receive the crown, and to govern henceforward for his own account, and with the title of king, the provinces he alone had saved, he should have placed that crown on his head, as he did in the Cathedral of Palermo, in the year of our Grace, one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight.

Scarcely, however, had Manfred been seated on his throne, when ambassadors arrived at his court from Germany, to contradict the report, and to plead the rights of Conradin, who was well, and living with his mother. If Manfred must now be considered as a usurper, he was a magnanimous and a fair reasoning usurper, for at once he granted a public audience to his nephew's envoys, and answered them in the presence of the prelates and magnates of the Two Sicilies, that, having once ascended the throne, it was no longer time for him to think of debasing its dignity, and descending from it; that, after all, he himself had gained the crown from the rapacious hands of the Pope; that he only succeeded in preserving it by the affections which his subjects bore to his person; that it could be to the interest neither of his barons, nor of his nephew Conradin himself, that that splendid heritage of the House of Suabia should be governed by a woman and a weak child; but that he had, and would have, no heir to succeed him save Conradin; that it was for him he conserved those states,

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\* “Mentre Manfredi era in Palermo, ginnse quivi novella, che il Re Corradino fosse morto in Alemagna; ma in questo passo d'istoria, gli scrittori, secondo le fazioni contrarie, non convengono. I Guelfi, come Giovanni Villani Fiorentino, e gli altri Italiani di quel partito narrano, che Manfredi, per eseguire il suo scellerato pensiero, che lungo tempo sotto contrario manto nascondea d'usurpar il Regno al Re suo nipote, avendo tentato invano di farlo avvelenare, avesse ordinato alcuni falsi messi, che gli portassero nuova di Germania, prima dell' infermità, e poi della morte di Corradino, e che questo rumore sparso in Palermo, ed in tutte le città del Regno, fosse stato tutto per sua astuzia ed inganno. \* \* \* \* Dall'altra parte l'Anonimo, ancorchè scrittor contemporaneo, ma tutto Ghibellino, e coloro che lo seguirono, narrano, che niente Manfredi usasse di simili inganni, ed astuzie; ma che sparsosi nel Regno cotal rumore della morte di Corradino,” &c.—Giannone, *Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli*, lib. xix.

which should be transmitted to him on his decease ; and that if Conradin should wish to enjoy beforehand the prerogatives of presumptive heir to the crown, and to make himself known to the people whom he was one day to govern, he should be perfectly well received and treated at his court ; Manfred engaging, moreover, to teach his nephew the virtues of his forefathers, and to cherish him as his own son.\*

From that moment Manfred had ruled as king, and the attachment of his subjects, in the mass, had suffered no diminution, although the spirit of treachery and revolt had been constantly fomented by Pope Alexander IV., who had inherited all the ambition, with none of the talents of his predecessor ; and some of the barons of the kingdom had persevered in their attachment to the Guelph faction. The arms of the King of the Two Sicilies had given that supremacy to the Ghibelline party in Tuscany, which they had secured in the more southern parts of Italy ; the victory of l'Arbia had humbled to the dust the proud city of Florence, which, from the spirit of the then reigning faction, was most devoted to the Pope ; the Pope himself trembled at the decline of his unjust power, but died in time (in 1261) to leave an opportunity to an abler pontiff to restore the Guelph supremacy, and to overthrow the political balance of power which Manfred had given to Italy.

Pope Urban IV., a Frenchman by birth, did, however, no more than Innocent IV. had done before him, by inviting Charles of Anjou, the Count of Provence, and brother to the sainted French King Louis IX. to cross the Alps to restore the ascendancy of the Church party, and to take possession for himself of the States of the Ghibelline Manfred, against whom he preached a crusade, with the grant to those who should bear arms in it, of all the indulgences, accorded at the time, to the deliverers of the Holy Land. At the time when Manfred paid the visit we have described, to his sister, the Countess of Caserta, he knew that Charles of Anjou was about to obey the summons of the Roman Pontiff, he had

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\* Giannone, *Istoria Civile*.

learned the treachery of many of his friends, but his bold heart knew no sentiments of fear, and it was a more domestic attack, a blow aimed at his tenderest affections, and which revolted the feelings of human nature, that had imposed secrecy on his tongue with her from whom he had no secrets, which had so moved him in the turret bower, and that now haunted him on his journey to Benevento.

The fair Bice was the daughter of the Emperor Frederic II., but by a different mother from the Countess of Lancia, who bore his favourite son Manfred. The son and the daughter were born and for some years brought up in different places, but the Emperor brought them together in his royal palace of Naples while they were yet children, and the rest of their education, all such parts of it as would admit of a community of pursuit, was completed together. Of nearly the same age, of a similarity of disposition, and accustomed to the society of each other in those days when the heart has all its ductility, and our dearest affections are formed, the young Prince and Princess grew up together, and their mutual attachment increased with their years. We may seek through the world in vain for a friend so dear, so trustworthy and devoted, as a fond sister ! Manfred felt this ; and even after they had ceased to be children, when the Count of Caserta had removed the fair Bice from the Court, as his wife, when the Prince was engaged in the weighty business of war and government, still would he cherish above all other pleasures the society of his dear sister ; and whenever cares oppressed him, or melancholy despondence invaded his susceptible, elegant mind, Manfred was sure to be found in the bower of Bice. Her lute and song, the very music of her speaking voice, had the effect on him that the harp of David produced on the troubled soul of Saul, and could soothe and tranquillize when every thing in the world beside failed. To his sister, in his happier moods, he was wont to pour forth his poetical essays ; and Bice was at once the Muse that inspired him, and the solitary repository of his inspirations.

So close an intimacy was warranted by their close consanguinity, and accounted for by the circumstances of their early life ; but the Church of Rome, or some of its adherents, with truly fiend-

like malevolence, had now dared to breathe the horrid implication, that the love of Manfred for Bice was not the love of a brother for a sister! The damning accusation had for some time been whispered, but it had lately reached the ear of the Prince. The objects proposed by the dark calumniators were manifold; and they looked with perfidious joy to these results: that the Count of Caserta, one of the most powerful barons of the kingdom, would at once credit the infernal tale, and convert himself into Manfred's bitterest enemy; that Manfred's party generally would be weakened in their attachment to an incestuous adulterer, and that the heart of the Prince, who had so triumphed over the Church and the Guelphs, would be more sorely wounded by this blow, than by any other human malice could inflict. In the last case, at least, they had calculated correctly. When a nobleman of his court, a man of dubious fidelity, poured the horrid calumny slowly and hesitatingly, but with all its venom in it, into the blasted ears of Manfred, he could scarcely have felt anguish more exquisite, had a brood of vipers crept into his brain;—his heart sickened—a glare of infernal light dazzled his eyes, and, turn where he would, he saw passing before him objects of disgust and pollution, and in the very scenes where he had been wont to indulge the purest feelings of his nature. It was as if the choice wine-cup in his hand, and at his lip, had been converted by a fiend's breathing over it, into mortal poison; as if the cool crystal stream, in which he was about to bathe, had been changed into liquid fire. He seized the chamberlain by the arm, and in a voice of thunder bade him unsay the foul, the blasting words!

"I readily unsay what I do not believe," said the noble; "but that will not prevent thine enemies, Sire, from repeating the odious tale!"

"Hark ye!" cried Manfred: "my temper has been tried, and Heaven knows to what extent! by desertion, treachery, and foul conspiracy: as yet I have not been a cruel man, or a vindictive sovereign, but, by the Holy Trinity! if I hear this infernal calumny, which would kill her whose pure life is worth a hecatomb of the gross wretches that surround me—if I hear it repeated, I

say, I will cast off the tender mercies of my nature—every turret in this castle shall be a den of torture—every hall shall flow with blood !—Look ye to this, and be silent !”

The chamberlain bowed and retired ; but when Manfred was left to reflection, he felt how impossible it would be to check the horrid tale, which would be propagated by the priests and monks, and openly asserted by the Church of Rome and his numerous and indefatigable enemies. All that he could hope was, to be able to prevent its reaching the ears of his sister ; and that the Count of Caserta, whom he had ever treated as a friend, would turn a deaf ear to it, should it be repeated to him. At their interview at the Castle of Caserta, he had not the strength, as he had said, to divulge the abominable secret that so harassed him, and he had endeavoured to discover whether the Count was already in possession of it or not. The approaching contest with Charles of Anjou, which would involve his crown, and perhaps his life, had really at the moment less importance in his eyes than these domestic matters ; and as Manfred pursued his moonlight journey to Benevento, sighing at times for the tranquillity of those nights of his youth when he strolled through the streets of Barletta with lute and song, he thought more of his sister Bice than of any thing beside.

The day after King Manfred's visit to the Castle of Caserta was a day of pomp and important deliberation in the fair and ancient city of Benevento, for the barons and great feudatory chieftains of the Two Sicilies assembled in its immediate neighbourhood in general colloquy, to discuss the troubled state of public affairs, and to concert the means of defending the kingdom from the coming arms of Charles of Anjou, the Pope, and the Guelphs of Italy generally. The Count of Caserta kept his appointment ; and when he arrived followed by a brilliant and martial retinue, and kissed the hand of his sovereign, Manfred saw no appearance of ill-will ; the clouds of yesterday had quitted his brow ; he was profuse of his protestations of fidelity and attachment, and smiled every time the eye of his royal relative met his.

The speech with which Manfred opened the deliberations of



the day was worthy of the occasion. He exposed to the assembled barons the injuries he and his predecessors had sustained from the ambition and hatred of the Church of Rome. Pope had succeeded to Pope, the most dutiful submission had been tendered, but their deadly animosity had known no truce. They had offered the crown of the Two Sicilies to foreign princes—they had claimed it for themselves—and now a foreigner—a Frenchman, was crossing the Alps, at the invitation of the Roman Pontiff, to despoil them of their possessions, and to deluge the land with Italian blood. If the assembled chiefs proved true to their King and to themselves, the invaders, who came with the crusader's cross on their breasts, but with no feeling of religion or justice in their hearts, would be repelled with loss and shame; and their whitening bones, strewed in the mountain passes of the kingdom, would warn future ages how they trespassed on right; but should dissension, and jealousy, and treachery, prevail among them, then would they establish a fatal precedent for foreign interference; the imposing defences with which Providence had girded their country, would be levelled by their own vice and imbecility; foe would come after foe; the kingdom of Naples would be ever the degraded prey of the last comer; and, after centuries of blood, the few bold spirits that lingered in the pusillanimous mass, would curse them, their ancestors, who began the lengthening series of humiliation and disgrace.

When the Prince undertook the task of self-justification—when he enumerated all the horrid calumnies propagated by the Popes and the Guelphs against himself and his family, when he alluded to what was fresh in the memory of all present, that they had accused his father Frederic of having put to death two children, the sons of his elder brother Henry; himself (Manfred) of having smothered his father with the cushions of his bed, when he lay sick and helpless at Ferentino; Conrad, his brother, of having poisoned the young Prince Henry; and himself again (Manfred) of having poisoned his brother Conrad; that, in short, they had described the whole House of Suabia as monsters of iniquity, as men in the constant commission of crimes the most odious and

most devoid of probability,\* he might have referred to the detestable accusation which had made his heart bleed, but still he could not do it; and with a countenance pale with anger and horror, he passed to other points.

He endeavoured to impress on the minds of the nobles that the French, for their part, were indifferent to the matters in dispute between himself and the Roman See; that they were only anxious for the gold and affluence of the kingdom, for the riches and splendour the barons possessed; and that they were "*ad spolia promptas, quærentes semper quid devorent.*" He justly characterised the Gallic nation as being impetuous as aggressors, but impatient of long resistance;† and he used every argument to raise the spirit of the nation, to keep the barons to their duty, and cause them to arm all their vassals for the defence of their homes. After this "*Parliamentum apud Beneventum,*" the Count of Caserta was entrusted with the defence of one of the most important points of the frontier—and the Count was not the only traitor destined to high command by the too-confiding Manfred.

As Sadik, the faithful Moor, who was never far from his royal master, stood on the bridge that overstrides the river Calore, whose waters wash the northern walls of the ancient town, and as he saw chieftain following chieftain from Benevento to their mountain homes, or the frontier fortresses confided to them, he could not help stilling his doubts and fears by praying to Allāh and the

\* "*Il n'y a pas d'exemple peut-être qu'une famille plus noble et plus vertueuse ait jamais été accusée de crimes plus odieux et plus dénués de vraisemblance.*"—Sismondi, *Hist. Rep. Ital.* ch. xviii.

† This drawing of the French national character is put in the mouth of Manfred by the anonymous author of the supplement to Nicolas Jamsilla's history. In another passage he repeats his opinion—the whole of the latter passage is curious:—"*Gallici enim in ipso instanti videntur audaces, nec sunt stabiles, nec animum habent fortes: omnino sunt pavidī, quando resistentiam aliqualem inveniunt. O bona posteritas, memoramini gesta progenitorum nostrorum. Nonne Theutonici gentes istas antiquitus vilissimas reputabant? Nonne hos et alios requirebant Itali, et eorum mero dominio multifariē submittebant? Fortiores sumus patribus nostris, majori etiam personarum et rerum potentia præditi, quid veremur? quid formidamus? Certe nihil aliud cogitemus, quam in exterminium hostes adducere; et eos à facie nostra delere.*"—Script. Rer. Ital. vol. iii.

Prophet, that all these fair spoken Italians would be as faithful to Manfred, and as brave in the hour of heed, as his Saracens of Luceria had been. "I have followed this gallant Christian," mused Sadik, as he returned into the town, "ever since he could wield a sword; and now, in mine old age, I would not see him fall! But these Apulian barons are a two-faced race, and the truth is not in them!"

Winter had succeeded to autumn, the red brown leaves no longer floated down the Calore and the Sabato; but the poplars, that so abound in this district, were bare on the banks of those rivers, and all the woods in the neighbourhood of Benevento were denuded and desolate to look at. A crest of snow was on the top of the gigantic Mount Taburnus, and the wintry wind howled through the Caudian passage, as though it still bewailed the humiliation of the Romans.\* It was again night; but instead of the fitful moon, which on a former occasion illuminated at intervals the neighbouring mountains above Acerra, a glaring comet, ever the object of dread to superstition, now cast its baneful light over the walls and towers of Benevento, where men's minds were troubled even in their sleep by the ominous apparition, and a general despondence reigned as to the consequences of the hostile armaments that were approaching those long peaceful regions. Save the watchmen on the walls, there was not a soul abroad, and a general sleep and silence seemed to reign in the city, when two figures glided from beneath the triumphal arch of the Emperor Trajan, which stood then, as it still does, unhurt by time or violence, a glorious feature of antiquity. These gliding figures stood some time muffled in their cloaks at the foot of the high pedestals of the marble pillars that flank that ancient gate. They seemed to be in expectation of some other person, or of some event; and ever and anon their heads were bent and their ears turned, as if to listen. Sounds

\* The "*Furcæ Caudinæ*," where the Samnites made the Romans pass under the yoke, are not far from Benevento: the precise spot is matter of dispute, which I cannot pretend to have settled, though I have often visited the neighbourhood, and traversed on foot every ravine that runs through those mountains.

however came there none, but those of the rushing river Calore, which, swollen by the winter rains, flowed close beyond the triumphal arch, and of the hollow and louder murmurings of the night breeze, which played under the arch itself, and among some ancient Roman ruins close at hand.

"I cannot bear this horrid symphony of the winds," whispered one of the men, who had already evinced his impatience, if not by words, by restlessness of action: "as they moan among these crumbling walls, they sound like a dirge to mine ear! Surely the hour of midnight, the moment thy magicians deem favourable for prying into the secrets of futurity, is approaching. Why cometh not their summoner?"

"Doubt not, he will be here at *his* time," replied the other man; "but while thou hast time to do it, renounce, I pray thee, thy unhallowed design of reading what Heaven has hidden from mortal man! What though this meteor forebode calamity,\* it doth not

\* The appearance of the terrific comet, and Manfred's consulting the astrologers, are not of my invention. Both the anonymous author of the supplement to Nicolai de Jamsilla's History, and the Florentine chronicler, Malespini, make mention of the facts.

"Ex his & aliis præsagiis, quæ cælum, terra et mare portenderant, intellectum recipiens, quod ex Dei judicio singula videbantur esse talia preparatoria contra eum. Illis enim temporibus cometa, qui multos annos clausus sub cœli volumine in sui apparitione consuevit benignus invitare, & subsistentie quassare dominia, velut solares radios suos usque ad terras lucidissima cometa extendit. Sed quamquam dicto Regi de suorum proxima ex precedentibus signis desolationis daretur intelligi, consulens tamen augures, & requirens astrologos, mentiebantur sibi quodam palliato solamine, per longa tempora regnantium," &c., &c.—Hist. Anonymi.

"E negli anni di Cristo mille dugento sessanta-quattro d'Agosto apparve in cielo una stella cometa con grandi raggi, che levandosi dall'Oriente con grandi razzi insino che era a mezzo il cielo verso l'occidente, la sua coma risplendea, e durò tre mesi, cioè nel mese di Novembre, e significava diverse vaietadi, che furono in più parti, e molti dissero, che apertamente significò la venuta di Carlo, e la mutazione che seguì appresso del detto anno del Regno di Sicilia e di Puglia, il quale si tramutò per la morte di Manfredi, da' Tedeschi a' Franceschi: e altre mutazioni di parti, che avvennero à più città di Toscana e di Lombardia, ma trall'altre mutazioni questa fu evidente. Come la detta istella apparve, Papa Urbano ammalò, e la notte, ch'ella venne meno, passò di questa vita in Perugia, e quivi fu soprellito, per la cui morte alquando tardò la venuta di Carlo. E Manfredi e suoi seguaci se ne rallegrarono, avvisando che morto il detto Papa, ch'era Franzese, s'impedisce la detta impresa," &c., &c.—Malespini, apud Muratori, Script. Rer. Ital. vol. viii.

follow it must fall on thy head ! That ghastly red light—that noxious radiance glares on Rome as well as on Naples and Benevento ; and that comet’s train is as visible in the camp of Charles of Anjou, as at the court of King Manfred. Its influence may be shed on thy veriest enemies ; but if on thee, woe is quick enough of arrival when it comes in reality. Let us then leave these gloomy ruins and return to our beds ; the sleep which will invigorate our bodies is of more value than the secrets that may peril our souls ! What must be will be !—thou canst not, by reading it, change so much as a single minute letter in the book of thy fate.”

“Sadik”—for it was the faithful Moor who thus sensibly remonstrated, and King Manfred himself who thus stole at midnight to an assignation with unhallowed seers—“Sadik, I have reasoned even as thou reasonest, but I am driven on by an irresistible impulse to know my fate, and what this horrent meteor portends. I know my purpose to be reprobated by my religious faith as well as by thine. I feel it is wrong, or why should I, who am yet a king, skulk thus by night and darkness and carefully conceal my object !”

“Then again, I say, let us stop short of its accomplishment ! We are yet in time to do so.”

The King was silent, and walked with hurried and irregular steps in the deep shade of the ancient arch ; but of a sudden his eyes was attracted by a bright meteoric light, which, breaking away from the hirsute train of the comet, shot across the heavens, and irradiated for an instant, as it passed over it, the opaque gloom in which he was walking. “Ah ! what mean these dreadful signs !” said he then, in an awful whisper : “the course of nature is troubled, the fires of hell seem to be lighted in the heavens, and I must know if such knowledge is given to mortal men—I am resolved to know from thy African necromancers what all this portends !”

“My Prince,” replied the old Moor, “my steps have gone with thy steps when thou wert a desolate fugitive : I have followed thee over midnight mountains and stormy seas,—in the battle, in the breach, my willing hand waved ever close after thine, and my heart went ever with thee,—but this time, I confess, I follow thee less——”

"Then follow me not at all, slave!" interrupted the impetuous Manfred: "I can meet thy wizards alone, though their obscene haunts be in the bowels of the earth, and their power such as the warrior's honest sword cannot cope with?"

"My Prince, where though abidest, I abide; and whither thou goest, I go! Ay! not even sin shall separate us; for I will share even that with thee!"

"Sadik! honest Sadik!" replied Manfred, grasping the Moor's hand, "I know thy faithfulness, and do thou excuse my irritation. I have not been always thus; but the falling off of friends, the maddening persecutions of foes; loud tongued calumny, which has not left an affection of my heart unwounded; and Treachery, which is undermining me with her hundred hands, have almost made me the violent capricious monster mine enemies describe me to be." He might have added, that misfortune had affected his understanding and judgment, and made him obnoxious to superstition in an extreme degree; for had the current of his fortunes run smooth at the time, he might have viewed the boding comet as other men did, with awe in truth, but without the impious endeavour to ascertain its import by magic and incantations."

"Hist! hist! Surely I hear the sound of coming steps," said Sadik, who had determined to remonstrate no more with his royal master.

• The next moment, a dark moving object turned the corner of the Roman ruins, near which they stood, and advanced towards them in the shadow of the wall. From its size it seemed rather a dog than a human creature; but there being no light save what was shed by the lurid comet, the impatient Manfred could not ascertain what it was until it stopped close before him, a little beyond the line of the shade in which he and his follower stood. By the red glare of the meteor, which at the moment concentrated its rays, as if on a congenial object, the King then made out the form of a dwarf, diminutive beyond any creature of the sort he had ever seen, and black as ebony. It did not speak; but after bowing its turbaned head, it wheeled round, pointed with long forky fingers in the direction whence it had come; and again, shuffling along in

Eastern slippers that seemed to be shod with iron, turned the corner of the ancient edifice.

Manfred and Sadik followed the dwarf closely ; and had not their minds been so thoroughly preoccupied, they might have felt wonder how so diminutive an object could walk with so rapid a pace. It was with difficulty they could keep up with it ; and when it stopped under the frowning walls of the ancient amphitheatre of Benevento, both were breathless.

At the present day this Roman work is but part of the skeleton of its ancient self ; its materials have been applied to modern usages ; its walls, that could resist the hand of time, have been levelled by the hand of man, and rude hovels built under the massy segment of the walled circle—the abodes of Benevento's most squalid misery. But in the days of Manfred, the edifice, though deserted, was almost undegraded : the walls closed in the arena, where blood no longer flowed, but where the grass grew, the bramble and the thistle ; the *vomitaj* still gave access to the encircling corridors, and the gradatory seats, which, though stripped of their marble, were otherwise unbroken ; and through one of these passages the black dwarf glided, again pointing forward with his long forked fingers. He was followed by Manfred and the Moor, who instantly found themselves in a darkness like that of the grave ; and it was not without frequently stumbling over the rubbish which had collected in the vomitory, that they reached the arena where the comet shed a partial and capricious light. In the midst of that circle stood three figures, that might have been mistaken, even by a brighter light than that of the meteor, for three marble statues—for three Roman effigies removed from their proper bases and niches in the walls of the amphitheatre—so stark and motionless were they. On nearer approach, however, Manfred saw their lips move—their hands wave three long white rods—and perceived that though the white robes were not unlike the Roman toga, they had each an oriental turban on his head, and a long flowing beard, and a countenance and complexion essentially eastern. He knew them for the seers whom he had appointed to meet him there.

"Great Prince, we are ready to do thy bidding, and to show thee on a wall, as in a mirror, the things that are to befall thee ; but hence, thou must follow us alone ! Sadik must remain here !— we may not withdraw the dread veil that conceals futurity, to more than the eyes of one individual at a time," said one of the magicians.

"Almanzor ! seer or devil ! I looked not for this when I unwillingly bore my lord's summons to thee," said the faithful Sadik ; "nor will I leave my master alone in your impious hands !"

"Then must our task end here !" murmured Almanzor, "We cannot thus show the Prince his fate !"

"Sadik !" cried Manfred, in a voice which again almost approached the tone of anger, "thou wilt obey my orders as hath been thy wont, and remain here !"

"Dost fear that we would hurt a hair of the head of the friend of the Saracens—of the generous Manfred ?" said one of the Seers. Dost thou think it a pleasant task for us to struggle with the spirits of another world—to wrench from them the mysteries of futurity ; that thou shouldst thus, when our labour and anguish are undergone, and our task all but completed, interrupt us by thy presence ?" inquired another of the necromancers.

"We can read, not control, destiny," said the third. "The King's fate will be what it is to be ; but were we of power to change it, we would make it brilliant and happy ; and this thou oughtest to know, Sadik, and not let thy suspicions alight upon us."

"Peace, my trusty friend !" said Manfred to the Moor, who was again about to remonstrate ; "my resolution is unalterably fixed ; I will see what these men can show me ; and as thou canst not see it with me, thou must await my return on this spot. There ! not a word ! it will not be long ere I return !"

With these words Manfred, in the midst of the Seers, and preceded by the dwarf, stepped across the arena, and presently disappeared from the eyes of the Moor, in a murky passage on the opposite side of the amphitheatre. Soon after he had plunged into palpable obscurity, Sadik heard a noise like that of a heavy iron gate revolving on its hinges ; and then a loud clap, like



thunder, rolled and re-echoed through the corridors and passages of the amphitheatre. The next instant a sound, as of the rushing of winds, mixed with the angry lashing of waters, and which seemed to proceed from beneath the centre of the arena, but deep, deep in the bowels of the earth, struck the listening ear of Sadik, who alone and in darkness—for the comet now did little more than make a “darkness visible”—began to tremble from head to foot, and already to wish most impatiently for his royal master’s return.

The silence of the grave succeeded. Within the lofty walls of the amphitheatre not even the laving of the river Calore could be heard, and the breeze of night had died away in whispers among the ruins; but a screech-owl came and hooted most melancholy! Sadik would have given a purse of gold to hear the sound of a human voice. To keep up his spirits, he spoke himself; but even his own voice, in that wild, ghostly spot, sounded to his ear, sepulchral, awful, unnatural!

An hour that seemed an age thus passed, and Sadik, whom no earthly terror had ever overcome, who had stood his ground in the most imminent of dangers, was on the point of running from his post, when he caught the echoes of a closing door; then the louder clap of another, and saw in the next instant his master, Manfred, rush from the same black passage into which he had entered.

There was no need of question as to the nature of the revelations that had been made to him by the Seers; for by the light of the comet, which now glared forth from the clouds that had obscured it, as if to hail the return of its victim within the circle of its malevolent influence, Sadik could perceive that Manfred’s frame shook—that his countenance was haggard, and his hair on end.

“Let us leave this damned spot!” cried he to the Moor, in a tone of voice that was more than horrid, “and curse the moment that my imbecility led me to it!”

With hurried and uncertain steps, and frequently stumbling over the fallen ruins in the darkness, the King and his faithful squire left the frowning amphitheatre, and returned homewards. The

Moor spoke not; for having been unable to prevent his royal master's folly, he would not reproach him for it when committed, and knew not what else to say; but the agitated Manfred, from time to time, let his feelings escape him in words.

"Fool! rash fool that I have been!" said he, "to go in quest of my calamities, to taste in one envenomed morsel, to drink at one draught, the wretchedness that is to crowd upon my closing life! I have borne woes, and still could bear them one by one; but to have them precipitated upon me at one minute point of time—to stand by inactive, and see the worst miseries of mortality develop themselves to mine eye—to see the whole, and the end of all, without a hope! Oh! this is too much!" And after sentences of this sort, he would sometimes curse the African seers as foul impostors, and vow that what they had represented to his deluded eyes never could be his fate, for there was not dishonour and injustice enough on earth to realize such a damnable catastrophe, nor could merciful Heaven permit it.

But the impressions of whatever he saw in the wizards' cavern on this sad night were not to be so easily disposed of. Though, when fortune seemed to smile for a moment, Manfred would recover the original strength of his mind, the shadows of superstition would haunt him at every contrary turn of events, and at every new disappointment the horrid fate pictured to him beneath the amphitheatre of Benevento would glare on his eyes, strong and appalling, and discouraging, as the writing on the walls to Belshazzar. And when the ill-omened comet disappeared, after his interview with the African necromancers, and the terrified people breathed again; and when the news came that the Pope Urban had expired the very night that the comet had vanished, and that Manfred had consulted his fate; those very circumstances, which otherwise would have renewed his hopes, only heightened his despair, for both events had been developed to him by the seers; and when so correct in part, they might be true in the whole; and he felt his destiny would be accomplished in the awful manner they had shown him.

Yet was not Manfred a man to resign himself calmly to his fate,  
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though he might feel it to be inevitable : every precaution of an experienced statesman and warrior was put into play, to meet the French Prince and the Italian Guelphs : he recalled his tried German cohorts from upper Italy ;\* he armed the Sicilian and Neapolitan galleys, that were joined by a fleet of the Ghibelline Pisans ; and presenting himself personally, now at Naples, now at Capua, now at Ceperano, and now at Benevento, and at all the points important for the defence of his kingdom, he seemed endowed with ubiquity, or a rapidity of motion far above human. But like Saul, after the witch of Endor "had divined unto him by the familiar spirit," and brought up "him whom he named," Manfred felt the cold hand of Despair grasping his heart, even in the midst of his heroism and exertions : at the council-board, or in his war-saddle, on the walls of his fortified towns, as in the bower of the Countess of Caserta his beloved sister, whom he would still find time to visit, the flitting images in the cavern, that told too plain a story, would rise before his eyes, and at times "he was sore afraid, and there was no strength in him."

Meanwhile, events came on with precipitous rapidity ; and every event was against the cause of Manfred, and most favourable to Charles of Anjou, who, after having been crowned, at Rome, king of the Two Sicilies, by four cardinals appointed by the Pope, was now on the confines of the kingdom with a formidable army, which the Pontiff had again declared to be engaged in a "holy war !"

This was the crisis that was to decide the doubts the devoted Sadik had ventured to entertain as to the "two-faced race," and to show whether the Apulian barons would be faithful to the cause of Manfred, which most undeniably had nationality and patriotism in its favour, or whether they would lay their kingdom at the feet of a foreign conqueror.

The doubts were soon resolved into melancholy certainty, for

\* "Et Theutonicorum cohortes, quas per Italiam sparserat, collegit."—Hist Anonymi, Supplementum.

the Count Giordana di Lancia, the King's maternal uncle, reached Manfred at Capua with the astounding intelligence, that his brother-in-law, the Count of Caserta, had betrayed at Ceperano the approaches to the kingdom and the passage of the river Garigliano,\* and now, from the camp of Charles of Anjou, alleged as the motive and justification of his treachery, the horrid calumny of his enemies,—the incestuous love of Manfred for his sister and Caserta's wife ! The unfortunate Suabian, after a paroxysm of indignation and rage, doubting now of the fidelity of all around him, and particularly of those Apulian barons who were allied to the Count of Caserta, found himself constrained to the humiliation of attempting to treat for peace with his successful rival ; but when his ambassadors reached the tent of Charles of Anjou, the only answer they received from the French prince was—

“ Tell the Sultan of Luceria, that I will neither have peace nor truce with him, and that soon I will send him to hell, or he shall send me to paradise !”†

With so uncompromising a foe, the sword was indeed the only umpire, and this Manfred prepared to wield as became him ; but as he marched with the Count Giordano Di Lancia to concentrate his forces at Benevento, whence, if expedient, he could retire into the provinces of Apulia, the scene of his early achievements and glory, his mind was farther depressed with the news that the Rocca d'Arce, a fortress deemed impregnable, and the strong town of San Germano, garrisoned by his Saracens, had fallen into the hands of Charles of Anjou, through a disgraceful mixture of care-

\* The anonymous chronicler, whose authority I have used in several instances, laments that “ ad malum destinatus Manfredus, qui apud Ceperanum gentis suæ resistantiam ordinare debebat, passus Regni vacuos, & sine custodiæ munitione reliquit, ut liber ad regnum aditus pateat inimicis.”

† Giovanni Villani, lib. 7, and Angelo di Costanzo, lib. 1. Gibbon says that the disaffection of his Christian subjects compelled Manfred to enlist Saracens ; and that this odious succour will explain why Charles gave him a Mahometan title, which however might have been applied as well to his father Frederic, and to himself at the very beginning of his career. But some authorities state, that at the news of the approach of the French army from beyond the Alps, Manfred had even sent to the coast of Africa to recruit among the Moors.

lessness, cowardice, and treachery on the part of those entrusted with their defence.

As Manfred passed again through the triumphal arch of Hadrian, and under the walls of Benevento's amphitheatre, he sadly mused to himself. "The story of my adventurous, calumniated life is rapidly winding up; the shadows that here flitted before my eyes will soon be bloody realities! My heart is broken already by the evil tongues and treacherous deeds of those from whom I merited better things." But he had now the decision of despair, and he added: "Yet I will not fall an easy, humble prey. I was born a prince; I have won and worn, and yet wear a crown; and my death shall be worthy of a king! Let the account of blood be on mine enemies' heads; but, by my soul! it shall flow in torrents ere Manfred be gathered to his fathers, whose insulted manes might invigorate my arm, had I no other incentive!"

It was on Friday, the last day of February, in the year one thousand two hundred and sixty-six, and about three months after the disappearance of the fatal comet, (for whenever there is a deed of horror and blood the chroniclers are scrupulously particular in marking the precise date,) that the invading army, after a disastrous march, appeared on the beautiful plain that surrounds Benevento, and encamped at about the distance of two miles from the city walls—of one mile from the main body of the army of Manfred. With the river Calore flowing between him and the enemy, with the strong city in his rear, and other local advantages, Manfred committed a fault in giving battle to the army of Charles, which was already suffering from want of provisions, and would have soon been reduced to the direst necessities. But Manfred was a doomed man; and issuing from Benevento, and crossing the river, he drew himself up in order of battle in the open part of the plain, called Santa Maria della Grandella, and at a spot particularly denominated La Pietra a Rossetto—a spot, be it said, of loveliness and tranquillity, that still bears the same name among the peasants of the neighbourhood, and which is consecrated by a little rustic chapel, where the pensive traveller may pause in melancholy speculation as to whose white bones are those which

are occasionally brought to the surface of the black, rich soil ; or utter a prayer for the long since departed, or a better supplication that this beautiful Italian champaign, be never again visited by a foreign foe !

It was the lovely morning of a mild day that seemed like spring ; for the winter, as if to favour the invading army, was unusually gentle\* this year, when the King of the Two Sicilies arranged his brilliant cavalry in three brigades, the first of which, consisting of twelve hundred German horse, was headed by the Count Galvano ; the second, of a thousand horse, Tuscans, Lombards, and Germans, was commanded by Count Giordano di Lancia, whilst Manfred retained to himself the third, which was composed of fourteen hundred horse, Apulians and Saracens.

As the gallant Suabian cast his eyes along the well-appointed squadrons—as he found himself on a battle-field where he had so often triumphed—as his war-steed pawed the earth, as if impatient for the *melée*, or bounded over the sward from flank to flank of the bold-looking army, he felt his spirits revive ; the sense of his inevitable doom haunted him no longer, and he prepared his soldiers for the combat with a buoyant and energetic speech.

On the opposite side, Charles of Anjou, who, in talent, spirit, and valour, was no unworthy rival, addressing his troops with the brief words, “The day we have so much desired is come at last,”† drew up his cavalry into four brigades. It was a melancholy sight, and which unfortunate Italy has too often seen repeated, to see here Italians joined with the Ultramontane invaders, fighting against Italians ; for, besides a considerable body of Romans that reinforced Charles’s second brigade, the fourth was composed entirely of four hundred Florentines, emigrants and Guelphs, under the command of the brave Count Guido Guerra.

To begin the bloody contest, Manfred pushed forward his

\* “E il verno stesso si vesti d’ un insolita placidezza per favorirli.”—Muratori, *Annali*.

† The chronicler Giovanni Villani gives Charles of Anjou’s words in *his* French : “Venu est le jors ce nos avons tant disirè.”—*Script. Rer. Ital.* vol. xiii.

the thick of the fight, as the Italians, and Germans, and Saracens raised their arms to strike with their *cutting* weapons, that could have little effect on bodies and limbs cased in armour, the French were instructed to aim with their *thrusting* swords under the arm-pits, exposed by the action of their enemies.\* In this last manner many of the Suabian's warriors were put *hors-de-combat*, and his army wavered before the insidious French.

But Manfred's line of reserve, or fourth brigade, which was composed of fourteen hundred Saracen and Apulian horse, and which he commanded in person, had not yet come into action, and its fresh charge on troops already fatigued might make the day his own. Of the faith and valour of the Saracens he had never had ground to doubt; he thought it necessary, however, to exhort his Christian subjects—his Italians;—but this was the crisis of the fears and treachery of his Apulian Barons, who, with the Grand Treasurer of the kingdom, the Count di Serra, and other men of lofty lineage and name, but menial hearts, instead of charging on the foe, fled the field: and they were followed in their ignominious flight by the greater part of the strong and intact cohort.

"By the soul of the Prophet!" exclaimed the Moor Sadik, who rode by the side of his betrayed master, "this is but what I foresaw on the bridge of Benevento! My hour may be arrived; but God is great! I shall die, as I have lived, a faithful soldier—and before the Angel of Death waves his black pinions over my old head, let me enregister a curse against these false Apulians. May some scribe, whose words are to be immortal† as the blessed words of the Koran, record their base and damnable desertion! May their posterity be a shame and a ridicule among the nations

\* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, ann. 1266. vol. vii.

† The immortal Dante has certainly rendered the subjects of the kingdom of Naples, or Apulians as they were then generally called, this service, in speaking of the fall of Manfred and of Corradin:—

"E l'altra il cu' ossame ancor s' accoglie  
A Ceperan, là dove fu bugiardo  
Ciascun Pugliese; e là da Tagliacozzo,  
Ove senz' arme vinse il vecchio Alardo."

L' Inferno, canto 28.

of the earth ; and may they be alternately betrayed and oppressed by every power that comes against them !”

When Manfred saw his false Barons flee, the scenes of the cavern again rose before his eyes, and his doom was again upon him ; but he knew that doom was not an inglorious one, and was ready to die rather than fall into the hands of his enemies, and prolong his life with disgrace. As he fastened his helmet on his head, his silver eagle, which had so often shone in battle and victory, detached itself from his casque and fell on the pommel of his saddle. “*Hoc est signum Dei !*” exclaimed he to the few of his friends who still remained near him : “ I fastened on my eagle with my own hands, and it is not chance that makes it fall !”

“ Still—Hurra, for Suabia !” shouted Sadik, as he galloped with Manfred and the Saracens of the cohort into the thickest of the fight, that was now evidently coming to a speedy conclusion in favour of Charles of Anjou. The trusty Moor had not the pang to see his royal master fall, for he was himself transfixed by a French lance, and died with the war-cry of Manfred on his tongue.

Without his eagle-crest, or any other sign of royalty on his person, and fighting “*en franc chevalier*,” the King of the Two Sicilies was at length slain in the thickest of the fight by a French warrior who did not know him. But not even death could stop the infernal hatred of his enemies !

“ For three days,” says the Florentine chronicler, “ they searched among the slain for the body of Manfred, which could not be found—and it was not known whether he was killed, or taken, or had escaped : and then he was found in the midst of the field, and recognised by several marks or signs about his person, by a valet of his army ; and this menial put his royal body across the back of an ass, and came to the French camp, crying, “ Who will buy Manfred ? Who will buy Manfred ?” for which he was beaten with a stick by one of the Barons of King Charles : and the body of Manfred was carried before King Charles ; and he, still in uncertainty, summoned all the Apulian Barons, his prisoners, and asked of each of them whether it was indeed Manfred ; and they all timidly answered *yes* ! The Count Giordano beat his face with both his hands,



weeping and exclaiming, "Oimè, Signor mio!"\* for which he was much commended by the French, and by some of his Barons. Charles was intreated to give the body the honours of sepulture: and the King answered and said, "Yes, I would do it with good-will, were he not excommunicated;"† and for this account he would not permit the body to be deposited in holy ground; but at the foot of the bridge of Benevento Manfred was buried, and over the sepulchre every soldier of his enemy's army threw a stone, whence they made a great mound of stones: but then, it was said, by command of the Pope, the Bishop of Cosenza had it dragged from that supulchre and sent out of the kingdom, which was holy ground (terra di chiesa), and it was buried on the banks of the river Verde, on the borders of the kingdom and the Campagna."

A sceptical historian,‡ in relating the threat of Charles of Anjou to send him to hell, would not decide on what was Manfred's doom in the other world; but Dante (himself a Ghibelline), who has eternized the infamy of his subjects, has collocated the unfortunate gallant King in the purifying regions of Purgatory, where he makes him relate his own fate in verses of exquisite pathos.§

The beautiful Countess of Caserta, the devoted sister of Manfred, whose attachment had been converted into so horrid a crime, and whose name was so identified with that of her brother, did not long survive him. She died the prisoner of Charles of Anjou.

But if the fate of the Suabian Prince was a cruel one, that of his fickle, wavering, unfaithful subjects was scarcely less lamentable; for the conquerors showed little mercy or distinction between their friends and foes, but committed upon the Neapolitans every excess

\* Inveges, another annalist, lengthens the lament of Count Giordano, but destroys the simple pathos of Malespina's "Oimè, Signor mio!" by adding "ch' è quel che io veggio! Signor buono, Signor savio, chi ti ha così crudelmente tolto la vita! Vaso di filosofia, ornamento della milizia, gloria de' Regi, perchè mi è negato un coltello, ch' io mi potessi uccidere per accompagnarti alla morte, come ti sono nelle miserie!" Inveges, *Annali di Palermo*, tom. 3, as quoted by Giannone, *Istoria Civile*, lib. xix.

† Giovanni Villani here again attempts French: "Si fereis je volontiers, si luy ne fust scommuniè."

‡ Gibbon, vol. xi.

§ See *L' Inferno*, canto xxviii.

of debauchery, avarice, and ferocity. The city of Benevento, which had made no resistance, was for eight days given up to pillage and murder. Not only were the men massacred, but the women, the children, the aged, were slaughtered in the arms of each other ; and Benevento, at the end of that butchery, presented nothing but deserted houses, whose thresholds and walls were everywhere stained with blood. As the overbearing, insolent French spread themselves through the kingdom, and as the government of the iron-hearted Charles of Anjou became more known, the too-late repentant subjects compared it with the gentle rule of Manfred, and generally confessed that they had unjustly considered the Suabian a rapacious wolf (*te lupum credebamus rapacem inter oves pascuæ hujus Regni*), but, confronted with the Angevin, he was a very lamb, (*agnum mansuetum te fuisse cognovimus !*)\*

\* Hist. Anonymi, Supplementum, Script. Rer. Ital. vol. viii.





### Imelda.

Oh lasso,  
Quanti dolci pensier', quanto disio  
Menò costoro al doloroso passo !

DANTE, *L'Inferno*, canto v.

The young forgot the lessons they had learnt,  
And loved when they should hate.

ROGER'S *Italy*.

**I**N the turbulent days of the middle ages the feuds of two noble families would often be sufficient to trouble the repose of the whole state, and private hatred and revenge would be the origin of implacable parties, whose animosities would be prolonged until

their origin was forgotten, or until that origin could not be cited without ridicule. But in no part of Europe was this so prominent as in Italy, where the passions of men were quick and vehement, beyond the notions of the phlegmatic nations of the north. In no other country was there so much *personality* in political partizanship. Not only did the smaller factions of the Montecchi and the Capulets, and others, that distracted nearly every city in Italy, derive from private quarrels, but even the great divisions of Ghibellines and Guelphs proceeded at first from antipathies and disagreements altogether personal.

In the fortunes of Messer Bondelmonte de' Bondelmonti, we have seen how the factions were introduced into Florence; and if they had already raged in Bologna, the deadly hate of Guelphs and Ghibellines was exaggerated and prolonged by the incidents we are now about to relate.

Near the strong walls of Bologna la Grassa,\* and the old church of San Salvatore, and looking southward over the fortifications of the city, upon the rugged Apennines, there stood, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-three, a large stone house, or palace, whose extent and strength denoted that its possessors were persons of the highest importance in the pros-

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\* Each of the great Italian cities has a distinguishing epithet of some sort. Rome is called the Ancient, Genoa the Superb, &c. &c. Leandro Alberti, a Bolognese, thus correctly describes the beauty and richness of the country about Bologna, and asserts her right to the title of the "fat" or exuberant. "Giace adunque questa città alle radici dell' Apennino (il quale ha dal mezzo giorno) tutto pieno di viti, olivi, fichi, pome, pere, e altri fruttiferi alberi. Poscia da gli altri tre lati, si veggono belli e larghi campi, producevoli di frumento, orzo, fava, e altre biade. Etandio se ne cava lino, canape, gualdo, gualda, e scordo con altre cose per il bisagno degli uomini. In questi fertili campi sono belli, e vaghi ordini di alberi dalle viti accompagnati, da i quali se ne cavano vini d'ogni maniera, con quei dei colli, cioè, moscatelli, tribiani, dolci, austeri, fumosi, mezani, bruschi, bianchi, e vermigli. Vi sono altresì alberi moroni da nudricare i vermicelli che filano la seta. Quivi anche si veggono larghi prati, e folti boschi, tanto per trarne legne, quanto per la caccia. Quivi appajono fontane d'acque fredde e calde molto medicinevoli al ristoro della sanità degli uomini. Fra i quali è l'acqua della porretta, tanto nominata. Si cava etandio da questo paese l' alume, e il ferro, con altre simili cose. Là onde per queste cose si può conoscere la opulentia di essa, la qual meritevolmente è dimandata, Bologna Grassa."—Descrizione di Tutta Italia, p. 328. Venetian Ed. of MDLXVIII.

perous Republic. The beauties of modern Italian architecture had not yet been introduced; the turbulent spirit of the times, when warfare was so frequently waged within the walls of cities, necessitated a greater attention to strength than elegance, and the noble Bolognese residence in question, like so many of the old palaces that still remain in Tuscany and Lombardy, wore rather the appearance of a fortress than of a peaceful, urbane dwelling-house. The main body of the building stood on the sides of a quadrangular court; but a grotesque ramification of out-houses, offices, and stabling, extended in the rear and on the flanks of the square court, and formed a variety of *cortili*, or lesser court-yards, of which some were dark, encumbered with rubbish, and never frequented. The lower part of the palace, which projected obliquely, like the basement of a tower, had but few windows, and they were low and narrow, and secured with massy iron bars; the only entrance was a low arched gate, the folding doors of which were sheeted with iron, thickly studded with iron knobs, and to appearance so heavy, that one might have doubted whether they were ever meant to turn on their hinges. Above the gate was a salient gallery, with loop-holes to discharge missiles, and trap-doors, through which boiling oil, or stones, or other instruments of annoyance, might descend on the heads of any unbidden and unwelcome intruder. The upper apartments, and there was but one storey above the ground floor, were better lighted and built with less attention to strength; but at the four angles there were four square towers that projected beyond the line of the building, which they overlooked by an elevation of several cubits.

At one of these towers, at the southern angle of the edifice, and at a lattice that commanded a view of the roots of the Apennines, covered with olive groves, orchards, and vineyards, and of a winding, pleasant road, that led thence to the old walls of Bologna, there were a pair of watchful eyes. The hour was not much after noon, but the early dinner was over, and, the season being summer, every other inmate of that strong house was enjoying the siesta. It might have been the custom to leave a person on watch, whilst the rest were buried in silence or sleep; but the individual in the

tower, a young and lovely female, seemed ill chosen for such a duty, and the impatient glances she cast along the winding road seemed rather expectant of a friend, than vigilant for the approach of a foe.

"Surely he tarrieth long to-day," said the maiden, as she looked for the hundredth time along the path; "it seems an age since I left my sleeping nurse in the chamber, and of a certainty the shadows of those walls do begin to creep westward! Alas! perhaps he hath been here before me, and, not finding me, hath departed!"

But the next instant the watchful eyes at the tower lattice were gladdened by the sight of a young man who emerged from the covering trellices of some luxuriant vine, that hung in festoons from elm-tree to elm-tree, and, careless of the scorching rays of the almost vertical summer sun, advanced by the open road that terminated at the foot of Bologna's walls. He came on with rapid steps, that showed full well he partook in the impatience of her who expected him. Soon he was lost under the fortifications, which were in that direction of no great height, and unwatched by any of the troops or citizens of Bologna, who were at the moment enjoying peace with all external parties. In the next minute he was seen climbing over the edge of the walls, which he presently descended in their interior side by a bold leap.

The maiden then ran from the tower, and having first watched and listened, rushed across one of the smaller and dark court-yards of the building. At the further end of the court she disappeared in a long narrow passage, which terminated at a low iron-bound door, which being opened without noise, the youthful pair were then in the arms of each other, with the subdued in tone, but passionate expressions of "My Imelda! my Bonifazio!"

After a *long* embrace—but youth and love find such ever short—too short! the youth, led by the maiden, appeared at the end of the dark passage. They were about to cross the scarcely less dark court-yard, when Imelda, pale and trembling, drew back and whispered to her lover in great alarm, "Hark! heard you nothing

in the passage behind us?" "Nothing!" said the young man, turning, as Imelda had done, to look into the passage.

His sense of sight, as well as that of hearing, was less acute than the maiden's, for he saw nothing; whilst she, becoming white as a statue, said in a deep whisper, "Santa Maria! surely I saw a man cross the passage—there! where the shadows lie so dark!"

"Sweet Imelda!" replied the youth, "this is but your fear; the door I entered was well closed, and those which open at the end of the passage are secure; but I will back, and try the dark concealment with my sword."

"Merciful Heaven! put up that weapon!" exclaimed the girl, clinging to the arm, which had already drawn a faithful rapier; "my terrors have deceived me, and it is nothing!"

The young man, however, explored the passage, and tried the doors, ere, with the agitated Imelda, he crossed the silent and shady court, and went into the tower from which she had watched his approach.

Scarcely had the too easily satisfied lovers\* entered the maiden's apartment, when a man indeed issued from the dark passage, and glided as silently as a flash of lightning, and almost as rapid, across the same court. But he took a different direction, and disappeared through a narrow door he unlocked, at the side opposite to the southern tower, and which seemed to lead to another of the towers of the strong building. In a few minutes he returned, with steps equally silent and hasty. But this time he came not alone; three young men, with an expression of the most deadly passions on their countenances, and with naked swords and daggers in their hands, came with him, and rushed after him

\* The Bolognese historian, Cherubino Ghirardacci relates the present fact with much simplicity and grace:—"Erano in Bologna due nobilissime famiglie, li Gieremei e li Lambertazzi, e avvenga che frà esse si trovasse un certo odio per cagione delle fattioni Guelfe e Ghibelline delle quali di sopra si è detto, nondimeno questo odio non puote vietare, che Imelda, figliuola di Orlando Lambertazzi, bellissima giovane ardentissimamente non s'innamorasse di Bonifazio figliuolo di Gieremeo de' Gieremei, bellissimo giovine, e ch'egli parimente non provasse per lei le medesime fiamme amorose, le quali essendo pur troppo cresciute ne' cuori di ambedue, fece sì che i due amanti un giorno insieme si ritrovarono," &c.—Lib. vii.

up the strong stone staircase of the southern tower. At the next instant a blow, a crash, like that of a forced door, was heard, and then a fearful shriek, and then the three sons of Orlando Lambertazzi, the noble master of the house, stood in the presence of their enemy, Bonifazio Gieremei, the son of their father's deadly foe, and in the apartment of their dishonoured sister, who had but time to flee from her lover's embrace, and to escape by a door which led from her bower into the main body of the mansion.

"Damnab! villain!" exclaimed the foremost of the revengeful three; "is it thus thou completest the wrongs we owe to thee and thine?—Be this thy reward!" and he thrust at Gieremei with his long rapier.

"One moment—one word" said the surprised lover, skilfully parrying the thrust. "The enmity that divides our houses left me no way save this,—but I love thy sister with a love as honourable as passionate, and will make her my bride. Heaven grant that this feud—a hatred I have long ceased to feel,—may cease for ever, and in the hearts of thine and mine, as well as in me!"

"Thy bride!—our sister—a Lambertazzi the bride of a Gieremei!" exclaimed the furious brothers with one voice: "we would rather kill her as we kill thee!" and with one simultaneous effort, and striking as it were with but one blow, they closed on the unfortunate youth, who was disarmed and thrown to the ground.

Though engaged in so unequal a struggle, which he would have obviated by the most honourable and sincere of proposals, Bonifazio was not one to relinquish life on easy terms; but as he was groping to recover his sword, the eldest of the brothers struck him in the breast with a dagger. The youth fell at his length on the floor of the room—the scene of his love, and of such happiness as he had never before conceived; and the brothers, with the horrid satisfaction of completed vengeance, gloated over his pallid face and bleeding body.

When this rapture of revenge had abated, the Lambertazzi, for they were young in years and in crime, and this was the first time their hands had dealt death to a fellow-creature, became much perturbed, and they gazed at each other with silent and haggard looks



—avoiding the body of their foe—the sight of the horrid deed of their own hands.

This awful stillness was at length broken by the eldest brother, who said in a hollow voice—

“His body must be disposed of—it must not be found here!”

“Whither shall we carry it?” inquired the youngest of the three, shuddering as he spoke.

“To a spot where no eye can see it—to the dark court beyond the Eastern tower, where it may lie until night, when we will bury it,” said the elder of the Lambertazzi, in the same hollow, ghastly tone of voice in which he had before spoken.

“This must not be known in Bologna,” said another of the brothers, already trembling at the consequences likely to result from the murder.

“No eye saw his entrance here save our valet Lodovico’s, and we are safe!” responded the eldest, unmindful at the moment of the thousand little circumstances that may penetrate the mystery of crime, and of that decree which seems to be established generally, even in this world, that the blood of the murdered shall not be drunk up in secrecy, nor the murderers escape without detection and punishment, or damning obloquy.

The valet who had accidentally discovered the enamoured Bonifazio’s visit, and had that morning watched him to the tower, where, a few minutes after, he saw him killed, now slunk away in affright and horror, nor would he listen to the voice of his masters, as they called him in a loud whisper from the top of the staircase to come and remove the dead body.

“The varlet is confused,” said the eldest of the brothers, returning into the room where the companions of his crime still gazed at each other with vacant, stupefied eyes, “and we must do it ourselves.—Come, Guido, a hand here!”

“I cannot touch that cold, dead body—I cannot even look at it,” replied the shuddering Guido, who was the youngest of the three.

“Then be it thy task to assist me, Anselmo! we have no time to lose—the family may soon wake from their siesta!”

Anselmo approached the prostrate body with his eldest brother ; but when, in raising it, he felt one of its cold clayey hands flap against his face, he let it fall to the ground, and retreated to the end of the room, shivering all over.

In this manner were these young men, who had committed the deed of blood, scared by the lifeless body of their victim, and for some minutes unable to remove it thence. But at length, with hearts colder than that corse, and with trembling limbs and hurried and uncertain steps, they carried it down the staircase of the tower, and across the court-yard, and through the dark passage, and then across another court, at whose extremity, among a heap of rubbish under a high wall, that there cast a deep shadow, they deposited it—and then absolutely ran away, as though that hapless being could have broken his “ cold obstruction ” and followed their guilty footsteps.

The rapid course of crime is a fearful theme ; and though the fact is trite, it is confounding, and almost inconceivable, to reflect on the extent of horrors that may be crowded into the space of a few brief minutes. A moment—a blow—had reduced to “ less than nothingness ” an exquisite being, whom it had taken twenty summers or somewhat more, to bring to the perfection of his beauty and his strength. But now he had entered that postern gate, with bounding heart, and a bounding frame so replete with life, that the very robe he wore, the very plume that danced on his cap, seemed to partake of vitality—and now there he lay still as a stone—a rubbish upon rubbish—and this was Bonifazio ! And still the sun shone brightly in the blue unclouded heavens, and the breeze sighed softly on Bologna’s walls, and played with the tendrils of the vines and the foliage of the gay trees beyond them ; and the same soft silence and universal repose reigned over the mansion of the Lambertazzi as before the murder, when Imelda, somewhat recovering from her consternation, and impelled by exquisite anxiety to discover what fate her lover had met from her irate brothers, with silent steps and listening as she went, returned towards her chamber in the tower.

She reached the door through which she had so lately fled from her brothers ; it was closed. She applied her ear to it ; she heard not angry voices within—no, not a sound : she lifted the latch—the room was empty—still ! with nothing to betray that deeds of violence had been committed there. She was about to breathe a thanksgiving to Heaven for the hope that Bonifazio had rushed to the door and escaped, when a little glittering spot, a stain on the dark oaken floor of the chamber, attracted her eye. Its colour could not be seen on the ruddy tinted oak planks, but she saw that spot was liquid ; and nearer, at her feet, she saw another small, glittering spot, and then another and another succeeding in the direction of the door that led to the staircase of the tower, by which she had introduced Bonifazio. She stooped to the dark oaken floor ; she put her finger's point into one of the liquid stains ; and then rising, and holding up her little hand in the light, she saw it was blood !

A dreadful conviction, a realization of all her worst fears, flashed over the already almost distraught brain of the young Imelda ; yet she did not shriek or faint, but stood statue still, with wild eyes fixed on her upraised hand, which was motionless and tense, with almost more than marble's rigidity.

"It is Bonifazio's blood !—my brothers have slain my love !" she murmured after some minutes : "let me see whither they have borne his beautiful body !" and stooping again, and following the traces of the blood, which had fallen here and there in drops, she issued from the door whose threshold she had last crossed with a rapturous heart, descended the winding stone stairs, traversed the court, still guided by the awful pilotage of blood, and came to the dark passage, where the ruby stains could no longer be seen. She flew along that dusky avenue : near its extremity were two doors ; the brothers, in their precipitate retreat, had not fastened that through which they had gone on their horrid mission, and it now stood slightly ajar ; she rushed wildly to it ; the light of heaven, though somewhat obstructed by lofty and overhanging walls, fell here, and she could again trace the glittering gouts of blood. As

she tracked them, a low moaning, weak as the moaning of an expiring infant, struck her quick ear. She bounded over the short space that separated them—she fell by the side of her love on the foul rubbish. For some moments she could neither speak nor move; and then she knelt over him, and taking his clammy right hand in both of hers, said with a tone and a look that might have drawn tears from the stones of the old walls around them :—

“Ah! my Bonifazio! is it to this my love hath brought thee! Look up, idol of my soul! or I shall go before thee on the path of death! Oh, look up but once—but one glance of those dear eyes, ere mine close for ever!”

The voice of his Imelda seemed to stay his flitting soul, and the eyes of Bonifazio again opened to the blessed light of the sun—but there was a sort of opaque glaze upon them, and they were awfully lustreless. He attempted to speak, but her sharpened ear, which could then have heard the motion of a bat's wing, could only distinguish the words—“Imelda—love—I die.” The maiden gazed wildly on her lover: save a little blood on the breast of his garment, there was nothing to betray his hurts. Could so little kill him—kill so bright and brave a being?

“Ah! no, Bonifazio!” she exclaimed most piteously, “thou must not, will not die; I will staunch that little wound, and then—”

“Poison!—there was poison on thy brother's blade. I feel it at my heart,” faintly murmured Bonifazio. And he was right; for, according to a treacherous, detestable custom, recently introduced from the East, the dagger of the revengeful Lambertazzi had been dipped in poison to give it surer effect.

Three years before this melancholy date, and in the Paynim land, the life of the gallant English Edward had been saved by the devotedness of the tender Eleonora: the lover of Bologna was as passionate and devoted as the Queen of England: with hurrying hands she undid the folds of Bonifazio's vest, and applying her sweet lips to the wound, she sucked the blood with the hope of extracting the poison; but, less fortunate than the

wife, the maiden could not draw enough to save her love ; she imbibed enough to kill herself !\*

At the hour of midnight, the murderous brothers went with the valet Lodovico, to bury the body of their victim. Through the dark passage, where their guilty consciences made them tremble at every step, they carried lanterns, but these they left at the door that opened into the court, for it was a lovely night, and the moon that "hung like a gem on the brow of the sky," illuminated the horrid spot. The shadows of the wall, and of the tall eastern tower, fell however deeply on the heap of rubbish, and it was not until he was close to it, that the eldest of the Lambertazzi saw there were two bodies there instead of one.

"Ha ! what is this ?" he exclaimed, rushing backward with the horror already on his countenance increased tenfold, and his limbs shaking like one struck by palsy.

His companions, who were behind him, and had not seen the bodies, followed his example, and they all four ran back to the door of the passage, where they paused in indefinite, speechless horror.

"What is it, my lord, that thus affrights you ?" at length inquired Lodovico.

"I struck my blow but at one, and there are two dead bodies lying on that cursed heap !" said the eldest brother.

"Merciful Heaven !" exclaimed Guido, the youngest and least ferocious of the three ; "my maddening fears were prophetic of the truth—Imelda hath not escaped from the house, but hath tracked her lover's body, and is here dying or dead !" and so saying, with an influx of the feelings of nature, and the returning attachment of blood, he ran to the heap. His brothers and the valet followed him.

As Guido stooped over the bodies in the opaque shade, the moon suddenly peered above the lofty tower, and shone full on

\* "E gittatasi sopra il delicato corpo, cominciò con la bocca l'infelice ad asciugare le velenate ferite, e mentre piangendo si doleva della morte di Bonifazio, passandole il veleno al cuore, cadde Imelda morta trà le braccia del morto amante."—Cherubino Ghirardacci.

the lovers, who lay locked in each other's arms, with their pallid faces close together, and their lips slightly apart, as though their dying breaths had been interchanged, and the last sigh of each drunk in by the other.

"It is, it is Imelda ! my sister !" groaned the youth, clasping his hands in desperate anguish. His brothers approached him, gazed for a moment on the awfully languorous expression and the doubly death-pale countenances of the young lovers, as shown by the pale light of the moon ; and then they all ran back to the mansion, utterly unable to perform the wretched ministry on which they came thither.

Such tragical events, and occurring to such persons as Bonifazio Gieremei and Imelda Lambertazzi could not be kept secret ; and when they were divulged on the morrow, they exasperated to absolute madness the two factions that had before hated each other with the most cordial hatred.\* The family of the unfortunate Bonifazio, who were Guelphs before, now became remorseless fanatics in the cause ; and to strengthen themselves against the Lambertazzi, who were attached to the Ghibelline party, they called in the aid even of those people who had hitherto been held as the enemies of Bologna. And while the Gieremei united themselves with the Modenese, the Lambertazzi contracted alliances with the inhabitants of Forlì and Faenza ; each faction labouring at home to make their countrymen adopt their enmities.†

The curse of internal dissension, and the implacableness of individual hate and revenge, which have so often enacted bloody

\* "Scoperto questo miserabil caso, di quì, suscitò alla palese l'odio mortale frà le due fattioni, e tanto crebbe che mandò la città in ruina e servìu."—Cherubino Ghirardacci.

† The Gieremei and the Lambertazzi had been at open war before, but this tragedy envenomed their hatred. A mere sentence like the following conveys a picture of the middle ages in Italy :—"Finalmente i Gieremei uscirono con le armi contra i Lambertazzi, i Gallucci contra i Carbonesi, ed i Lambertini contra i Scannabecchi, gli Artenisi contra quei da Castel de' Britti ; e fattisi incontro alla croce de' Santi, per buono spatio di tempo stettero alle mani insieme."—Cherubino Ghirardacci, *Storia di Bologna*, ann. 1260.

What barbarous sounding names !—what a pretty number of feuds in a state not larger than some of our English parishes !

tragedies in Italy, now raged with all their vehemence. The Gieremei, on whose side the sympathies of the greater number of the citizens might incline, on account of the foul death of the gallant and admired Bonifazio, drew out the Carroccio, or standard car of the Republic, to the great square of the city, where the Lambertazzi attacked them. For forty days, Bologna was one battle-field, the two factions fighting without truce or pause, in the public squares, or round the fortified palaces of the chiefs of the two parties. The daring, reckless spirit thus expended in civil broils, the headlong fury of these Guelphs and Ghibellines, might, if united on some proper occasion, have sufficed to deliver the half of Italy from the foreigners who kept her in thrall ; but it seemed by a lamentable fatality, that the Italians could not be ardent and bold except led on by private animosities, and fighting against Italians. "At last, after having shed torrents of blood, the Gieremei rendered themselves masters of all the fortresses of the Lambertazzi ; and these last were driven out of the city with their friends, and all the Ghibelline party. Never, in a civil war, was the abuse of victory carried farther : twelve thousand citizens were involved in a sentence of banishment ; all their property was confiscated, and all their houses, after having been abandoned to pillage, were razed to the ground."\*

The scene of the murder, the mansion of the Lambertazzi, was among the first to fall beneath the fury of the Guelphs ; and with this ruin and bloodshed, which after years were to see renewed, was avenged the death of Bonifazio and Imelda.

\* Sismondi, Rep. Ital. chap. xxii.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Thirteenth Century.

#### FROM THE SICILIAN VESTERS TO THE END OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

1282.—AFTER the dreadful massacre of the “Vespers,” by which the Sicilians avenged themselves “for the rod of iron with which Charles of Anjou governed them, his taxes, fines, and confiscations; for the pride of the French conquerors, their insufferable incontinence, and the violence committed by them on the women of the island;” Sicily fell into the hands of Peter of Arragon, whose wife, Costanza, was daughter of the unfortunate Manfred, and the last of the Suabian branch; and, as such, could advance some claim to what was given her by the Sicilian nation, principally through the intrigues of that most astonishing of conspirators, Giovanni di Procida.

The Tuscan chronicler, Giovanni Villani, has recorded a touching expression of the anguish and despondency of Charles of Anjou’s mind, when he received the intelligence of the loss of that beautiful island:—“My Lord God!” he was heard to exclaim, “since it hath pleased thee to turn fortune against me, grant at least that my descent from the pinnacle of my power and glory be made by little steps!”—(Chron. lib. 7, cap. lxi.) He determined, however, on an exterminating war to recover Sicily. In his first enterprise—the siege of Messina—he was completely foiled, and forced to a disgraceful retreat. He was followed by Ruggiero di Loria, “il più valoroso ed avventurato condottiere d’armate navali che fosse allora,” who took twenty-five of his galleys, and burned on the coast of Calabria eighty Uscieri, or transports; and this under the eyes of the fiery Charles, who gnawed his sceptre, or truncheon, (apparently a usual trick of his,) with impotent rage.

Interdictions and excommunications were liberally fulminated by the Pope, (at the time, little more than a creature of the French conquerors,) but the wrongs of the Sicilian people had been real and excessive; their spirit was patriotic and unanimous, and the spiritual thunders of the Pontiff were as unsuccessful as the temporal arms of the King.

In Upper Italy, the insane wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines continued to distract nearly every one of the little states. As the still powerful Charles of Anjou headed and protected the Guelph party, it was generally successful,



though it sustained a sanguinary reverse this year at Forlì, against which Ghibelline city the Pope had long been carrying on a remorseless war, and spending in it the money collected from the devout for the succour of the Holy Land. This same year also saw the commencement of a war between the Genoese and Pisans, described then as “popoli amendue potentissimi per terra e per mare,” which did not end until Pisa was utterly ruined.

1283.—Charles of Anjou, after his reverses the preceding year, took the romantic step of challenging Peter of Arragon to a personal encounter. The place chosen for the duel was Bordeaux, then belonging to the King of England, whose consent it was deemed necessary to obtain. The day fixed was the 15th of May of the present year; and it had been declared by the two royal rivals, that whichever of them should be vanquished, or fail in his appointment there, should not only lose all right to the kingdom of Sicily, but be deprived, moreover, of his hereditary states, of the title of king, and banished for ever from all society of nobles and knights, as a felon, a traitor, and a man without honour. Each of the sovereigns was to be accompanied to the lists by a hundred knights of character and fame.

The Pope, who did not admire or approve of this precious piece of royal romance and chivalry, did what he could to dissuade Charles; and King Edward of England declared by letter that he would not give his sanction and securities for the duel within his dominions, were he even to gain the kingdoms of Arragon and Sicily by so doing. But nothing could cool the ardour of Charles of Anjou; and on the day appointed, his relative, Philip the Bold, the French King, advanced to within a day's distance of Bordeaux, with a vast number of lords and knights, and a body of three thousand men at arms; whilst Charles went on to the city and entered it, with his hundred knights chosen from among the boldest chivalry of Provence, France, and Italy.

On the other hand, Peter of Arragon, having left his Queen Costanza as Regent of Sicily, of which he had created Giovanni di Procida Grand Chancellor, had set out to keep his appointment. It does not appear that he was ever deficient in personal courage; but the King of England had not guaranteed the field: the King of France was at hand—he might apprehend treachery, and certainly did not appear in the lists, where Charles remained on horseback till sunset, his trumpets sounding the challenge, and his herald repeating at intervals the name of the recreant Peter of Arragon. After the time prescribed by the uses of chivalry had elapsed, Charles repaired to the Seneschal of England, who governed Bordeaux, and claiming his attestations to all that had passed, and declaring Peter to be a coward, and obnoxious to all the losses and dishonour included in the letter of the challenge, rode away.

Several chroniclers, however, add, in favour of Peter, that he *did* present himself at Bordeaux on the 15th of May, but alone and disguised, to the Seneschal of England, who made a written act of his presentation, and received Peter's arms in proof of the same; and Peter declaring that he considered himself

not in safety there, that he held himself as disengaged from his promise by the conduct of his enemy and the King of England, and that he feared to be waylaid and betrayed, he galloped away towards his own states of Arragon, and went ninety miles ere he took any repose. See Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 1283; Giannone, *Istoria Civile*, cap. xx. &c., &c.

Though the conduct of Peter of Arragon excited severe criticism among the chivalry of Europe, and was differently, and by some most odiously, represented, it did not detach from him the affections of the Sicilians—perhaps solely because he governed them better than Charles had done, and because their hatred to the French was more inveterate than ever.

1284.—Whilst Charles of Anjou was returning to his Italian states with fifty-five armed galleys and three large transports full of troops, the brave Sicilian admiral, Di Loria, the Nelson of these ages, defeated and took prisoner his son, Prince Charles, whom he had left at Naples as regent during his absence.

1285.—Defeated and humbled to the dust by the Sicilians, whom he had trampled under his feet, with the heir to his throne a prisoner in their hands, Charles died on the 7th of January, at the city of Foggia in Apulia, with a lie in his mouth, if he indeed uttered the words that have been attributed to him: “Sire Dieu!” said he, addressing the Host itself—the transubstantiated Divinity—as he received the last communion, “Sire Dieu! I believe that thou art my Saviour; and so I pray thee to have mercy on my soul! And as I made the conquest of the kingdom of the Sicilies only to serve Holy Church, and for no profit or coveting of mine own, so do thou pardon my sins.”\*

On the 1st of May this year, the Genoese gained an important naval victory over the Pisans, sinking four galleys, burning one, and taking eight, with fifteen hundred men prisoners. But by the month of July, so astonishing were the energies and resources of these little Republics, the Pisans again took the sea with a fleet of a hundred and three galleys, and presented themselves in parade before the port of Genoa. “There the Pisans provoked the Genoese to sail out and fight, and they shot a number of silver arrows into the port of Genoa. This was a bravado frequently in use between the two rival people, who thus meant to imply, and to make pomp of, their wealth and prodigality. The challenged Genoese replied, that their vessels were not yet ready, but they would work at them with great activity, in order soon to return the Pisans their visit.” Sismondi, *Hist. Rep. Ital.* And the visit was soon paid, and in the battle of Melora, where Oberto Doria, Corrado Spinola, and Benedetto Zaccharia fought for Genoa, and the Podestà Morosini, Andreotto Saracino, and the ever-memorable Count Ugolino, for Pisa; after an obstinate and most sanguinary contest, the Genoese remained victors. Besides the immense number who fell in battle, “eleven thousand of the Pisans were carried to the

prisons of Genoa, where (a horrible fact, that makes us detest the victors,) the greater part of them, by little and little, died of want ! And hence arose the common proverb, 'Chi vuol veder Pisa, vada a Genova ;' (Let him who would see Pisa, go to Genoa.) The speculators in the mysteries of Heaven remarked, that in the same neighbourhood of Melora, where the fatal battle was fought, the Pisans, in the year 1241, had sacrilegiously made prisoners of the prelates who were going to a general council of the Church, and believed that God had waited forty-three years to punish them for that misdeed. What is certain is, that from that battle, from the great loss of her subjects, patrician and plebeian, Pisa could never lift up her head, and went on declining until she finally lost her own liberty."\*

1286.—Ruggiero di Loria brought the news of the death of King Peter ; on which James, Peter's second son, was crowned King of Sicily. The indefatigable admiral then went to ravage the coast of Provence, whilst one of his Sicilian captains took the islands of Capri and Procida in the Bay of Naples, and burnt Astura on the Roman coast, where the unfortunate Conradin had been betrayed to his cruel enemy, Charles of Anjou.

1287.—Ruggiero di Loria gained another great victory over a Neapolitan fleet at Castellamare, in the Bay of Naples, taking forty-four galleys, and an immense number of the barons of the kingdom prisoners.

1288.—The horrid tragedy of Count Ugolino, which Dante has eternized, was perpetrated at Pisa, where the Count had erected himself into a despot.

Ugolino, whose guilt, whatever was its extent, was so atrociously punished, was besides accused of having lost the battle of Melora on purpose, and prevented the ransom of the Pisan captives at Genoa, in order to secure his power at Pisa. But in all ages, and among all people, the unsuccessful party give easy credit to an accusation of treachery.

1289.—The war continuing between the successors of Charles of Anjou and Peter of Arragon, the Sicilian admiral, Di Loria, made several conquests in the Calabrias, and seemed to threaten the existence of the Angevin dynasty in its continental dominions.

The people of Reggio in Lombardy rose against the nobles, and the city was soon divided into two violent factions, called *Di sopra* and *Di sotto*, or the high and low.

The Venetians were at war with the people of Frieste, and defeated in a disgraceful manner, in a siege they laid to that city.

The city of Reggio, tired of its civil wars, and admiring the tranquillity which Modena enjoyed under the pacific government of Obizzo Marquis of Este and Lord of Ferrara, by unanimous accord gave itself up to him. Piacenza in the like manner resigned its liberties to Alberto Scotto.

1292.—Ruggiero di Loria gained another great victory over the forces of Charles II. on the coast of Calabria.

1295.—The Constitution of the Republic of Florence was violently changed and rendered more democratical than it had been by Giano della Bella.

The great rivals Venice and Genoa were at war. Marco Basilio, with twenty-eight Venetian galleys and other vessels, was defeated in the seas of Greece by Niccolo Spinola, the Genoese admiral, with an inferior force.

The city of Pistoja was divided into the factions of the Bianchi and Neri; "and this poison," says a cotemporary chronicler, "was rapidly spread in the cities of Florence and Lucca, and other parts of Tuscany, where each of the cursed factions found protectors or partisans."

1296.—The Guelphs and Ghibellines of Genoa carried on a civil war within the city. The Grimaldi and the Fieschi (we are tired of these odious enumerations!) headed the Guelph party; the Doria and the Spinola, the Ghibelline. They defended themselves in their towers and strong houses, each party attempting to make itself master of the Palazzo del Publico, or municipal palace, and the other points of strength within the walls of the town. Many houses were burned to the ground, and the roof of even the Cathedral consumed, because the Grimaldi had fortified themselves in the great tower of that church. After the fair city had been the scene of these tragical proceedings for more than a month, the Grimaldi and the Fieschi, with the Guelphs, their adherents, fled, and the Ghibellines triumphant, elected a Spinola and a Doria to rule the Republic.

1297.—The long quarrel between the Pope and the Colonna family, which led to so many sanguinary deeds in Rome and its neighbourhood, began this year. It is said to have been hastened on by Stefano Colonna (the nephew of the two Cardinals Colonna), who unceremoniously made prizes of the mules that were transporting the Pope's treasure from Anagni to Rome. The following year, the Pope proclaimed a crusade against the powerful family; nor did he stay his hand until much blood had been split, Palestrina, and some other of their fortresses razed to the ground, and the proud Colonnese, dressed in mourning, had thrown themselves at his feet and implored pardon and mercy.

1299.—Charles of Valois, a French prince, who had acquired great reputation by reducing the Count of Flanders to implore the clemency of his brother Philip the Fair, was invited into Italy by the Pope to oppose Frederic, the son of James of Arragon, and now King of Sicily, and every other enemy to the Church of Rome. The promises held out to Charles of Valois were almost as flattering as those which had attracted Charles of Anjou to Italy. He was to be imperial vicar and pacificator of Tuscany, Count of Romagna, captain of the patrimony of Saint Peter, Lord of Ancona, and prospectively King of the Romans, which latter high-sounding title (and now it was but a name, for the Popes were kings) the Pontiff Bonifazio had refused to Albert of Austria.

The Thirteenth Century, which we have brought to a close, stormy as it was,

was glorious to Italy. In its course, one of her little republics, the enterprizing Venice, had captured Constantinople, and possessed herself of three-eighths of the Roman empire ; her rival, Genoa, had also made extensive establishments in the Levant, and, in spite of their virulent factions and insane wars, a number of independent republics had sprung up and increased in wealth, civilization, and population. Though the science of war remained stationary, the more valuable one of law and civil rights made considerable progress, and literature began to be cultivated with ardour and success. Indeed, to this century, we may say, is due the glory of the birth of the Italian language, the most beautiful of modern idioms, which in the hands of the divine Dante, rose *at once* from its cradle to its throne of pre-eminence—from weak, uncertain tottering infancy, to manly maturity, without passing through the intermediate stages or grades that are ordinarily attached to the growth and development of **every thing** physical or moral.



## The Galley-Fight.

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Io ti cercava, e non mi cal ch' io muora,  
Se ti ritrovo.

B. SESTINI, *La Pia*, canto iii.

Oh quale  
Qual mi dà forza il sol tuo aspetto ! Io tanto  
Per te lontan tremava.

ALFIERI, *Saul*, atto i.

IN the year of Christ, one thousand two hundred and eighty-four," saith that most picturesque of Italian chroniclers, Malespini, "Messer Ruggiero di Loria, admiral of the King of Arragon, who had taken possession of the island of Sicily after the massacre of the vespers and the expulsion of the Angevins, sailed from Sicily with a great armament of Sicilians and Catalans, doing great damage to the people of the absent King, Charles of Anjou ; and he came with his armament of galleys even within the port of Naples, crying out, and saying words of great contempt against the said King Charles, and all his adherents, and asking battle of them. And this did the said Ruggiero in order to draw out the Prince and his people to open combat, for he was cunning in maritime warfare, and he knew by his light courier boats, that King Charles, with a formidable armament, was returning from Provence, and was already in the sea of Pisa ; and so he was impatient to fight, that he might depart and return into Sicily, before the King could fall upon him. And it happened that the Prince-Regent, the son of Charles, who was present at Naples, seeing himself so insulted by Sicilians and Catalans, in fury and without

order, embarked with his people in his galleys, and against the express commandment which his father, King Charles, had given his son, that in no manner, and in no case whatever that might occur, he should leave the port and range himself in battle, until his, the said King's, return. But thus disobedient, and in ill order the Prince issued with thirty-five galleys, and more other vessels, from the port of Naples, to fight Messer Ruggiero di Loria.\*

It was with a joyful heart that the Sicilian admiral, who united to valour and good fortune, which in the long run is but another word for good conduct, a degree of skill in his profession of a sailor far superior to what we have any example of in these times, saw the ill-equipped and hastily-armed galleys of the Angevin Prince row beyond the protecting mole and piers of the port into the fair open bay of Naples. The insulting taunts and bravadoes of his hardy, experienced crews were continued, and gave fury and speed to the Neapolitans, until the foremost galleys of Prince Charles were within a cable's length of them; but then, as belying their boasts, and showing themselves braggarts and cowards, the Sicilians and Catalans took to flight, and rowed with all their strength away from the shores of the gulf.

"Let not the insolent marauders escape us!" cried the Prince, from the elevated poop of his galley; "we must train them every one at our sterns into the safe harbour, and let my sire see we can conquer in his absence! Forward! forward! my Neapolitans, and death to the vesper murderers!"

Inspired by the voice of their Prince, by their numerical superiority to the Sicilians and Catalans, and the confidence-bestowing sight of a retreating foe, the Neapolitans laboured well at the oars of their galleys; and always near, but never quite at hand, with the fleet of Di Loria, whose rowers were quite as active, they shot across the bay, and beyond the beautiful but not bold point that Posilippo projects into the sea, dividing, as it were, the gulf of Naples into two parts, of which one runs in under Vesuvius, the mountains of Castellamare and Sorrento, and the other

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\* G. Malespini *Storia Fiorent.* t. viii.

stretches round by Pozzuoli, Baiæ, and Bauli, to the bold headland of Misenò.

The two fleets could now be no longer seen from the city of Naples, which was all animation ; but its thronging inhabitants poured themselves out on the neighbouring hills of the Vomero, Sant' Elmo, and Posilippo, to watch the exploits of their countrymen ; whilst others of higher condition, or greater patriotism, or with heavier interests at stake, mounted their horses and galloped round the shores of the gulf, after Prince Charles and Di Loria.

But of all those cavaliers who followed with anxious eyes the hostile armaments, which went farther and farther away from Naples, there was nobody seemed so intensely interested as a young person in the garb of a page, accompanied by an old man, who wore the dress of a French courtier, and was known to most of the city as one of the household of Prince Charles. These two individuals had mounted two spirited little Calabrian horses at the very moment that pursuit seemed likely to carry the Prince beyond ken of the town, and they were now descending the reverse of the hill of Posilippo to the plain of the Bagnoli, and the open, curving sea-shore that extends to the ancient and picturesque town of Pozzuoli ; the younger of the two, with eyes so fixed on the galley which bore the royal standard, that he seemed scarcely to see any other object, and to leave entirely to his palfrey the care of the road, though that road was rough and steep, and at some points even dangerous.

Before they reached level ground, the galleys, both of Sicily and Naples, were seen spreading their sails to a gentle breeze that had sprung up ; and in doing this, by the superior manœuvres and rapidity of Di Loria's crews, his fleet evidently gained time on the enemy, and shot a-head in beautiful style. The Neapolitans, however, laboured well in his wake with oar and canvas, and taunted the retreating foe with shouts so loud, that they could be heard far across the waves and on the shores of the bay.

It was a spirit-stirring sight, this same chase ! and as if determined not to be left behind, but to witness all that might occur to the fleets, the young page put his palfrey to his speed, and spite of



the remonstrances of his more sedate companion, continued to gallop without once drawing rein, until they reached the walls of Pozzuoli. Here the old courtier, who had several times shown strong symptoms of discomfort, and would have given up the race had he been sufficiently master of his steed to restrain him, when preceded by his galloping, spirited companion, protested against the further continuance of the journey in such a manner.

"I aver, my gentle, but somewhat hot-headed friend," said he, laying his hand on his companion's rein, "that this is not a mode of travelling befitting my state and dignity. I cannot ride now as I did at the battle of Benevento, when charging——"

"Not a word of the battle of Benevento," interrupted the page; "when you commence that theme you never end: besides, you know I have heard it all so often, and now I have ears and eyes only for the fight or chase before us, and the fortunes of my lord the Prince! I will not lose his gallant flag from my sight, shape they but their course inland, as they are doing, should I gallop as far as Gaeta!"

"Your anxiety is natural to your state; ay, and laudable," said the chamberlain, still holding his companion's rein, and moderating his speed, as they descended the steep, paved streets of Pozzuoli; "but the Sicilians will all be beaten and taken without our aid; the Prince will be back ere long; and then figure to yourself his choler, should he find his two favourite Calabrian steeds foundered, and learn this pretty scapado of yours. I shall never be pardoned for letting his pet bird escape the cage—I shall be disgraced, and of a good truth my bones ache sadly already from the rate we have ridden at, and my stomach requireth restoration. Prithee let us pause here and refresh ourselves and our horses, and then——"

"Listen, Messer de Beaulx," again interrupted the page, "I shall not stop until I see the issue of this chase, or until my horse drops under me; but you may stay where you are."

"And so add to the agreeableness of the account I shall have to give to the Prince of you, and of the care I have taken of you in his absence! No, no! where you go I must follow—but do ride

somewhat less precipitously," rejoined the chamberlain, in a supplicating tone of voice.

"Then forward with me!" cried the page, twitching away the rein he held, and cantering out of the town, which they had now traversed.

From the open road beyond Pozzuoli, glancing over the truncated and fallen columns of the ancient temple of Serapis, and along the arches of the ancient mole, misnamed the "Bridge of Caligula," that boldly strides far out from the shore towards the opposite port of Baiæ, the keen eye of the page again caught the galleys, which, pursuers and pursued, seemed now close together. Presently the fleet of Di Loria were seen to lower their sails, to close with each other, to relent their speed; and those on shore thought this would be the scene of action. But their manœuvre of taking in canvas was followed by the galleys of the Prince; for the light summer wind had entirely died away; and on their long oars Sicilians and Neapolitans again swept over the smooth bay, which did not seem destined to witness the combat, as Di Loria now shaped his course for Cape Miseno at the head of the gulf.

The sea-washed walls of Pozzuoli, and the volcanic ridge of hills in the rear of the ancient town, were bespread with spectators, though not so numerous as when its old inhabitants crowded to witness the pageantry of the Roman Emperor,\* whose caprice it was, that Puteoli and Baiæ should be united. Since those days the course of tyranny, and then the conquests and incursions of barbarians of various races, but all destructive, had desolated these, the fairest regions of Italy, the proud Puteoli was shrunk to the modern and obscure Pozzuoli, and the fisherman's bark glided over the submerged bases of marine palaces,† which were all that remained of the patrician Baiæ and Bauli,‡ save here and there the ruins of a bath, or a rent temple on the shore. The

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\* Caligula. See Suetonius, &c.

† The traveller will remember these sea-covered ruins, particularly those near the place called now "I Bagni di Nerone."

‡ Bauli, called by the peasantry Bacoli. I once passed a pleasant night at that little village in a Roman tomb, that some poor children had converted into a dwelling-house.

population had not decreased more in number than in national spirit, and it was but as a pageantry or a spectacle that the mass gazed on the fleets and the banner of their Prince.

"Let us away and dress our vines," said a peasant to his comrades by the road side ; "little can it matter to us whether Charles of Anjou, or Peter of Arragon prevail in the fight ; our lot is to be equally oppressed and ground by all, and come what masters that may to Naples, it is but to drain and degrade the Neapolitans !" Besides these sentiments of despondency and indifference, there were others of a livelier and more hostile character in the breasts of many assembled there, for it was with a sceptre of iron that Charles had ruled his conquests.

Meanwhile the impatient page, on whom many curious wondering eyes were cast, continued his rapid ride along the smooth beach, followed at some distance by his groaning companion. They passed the narrow dark passage cut through the hill by the baths of Nero, now the only road round to Baiæ by the sea-side, and galloping past the Roman ruins, without a glance at their fallen grandeur, they took the rough hilly path that leads by Bauli to Cape Miseno.

A picturesque mass of ruins now crowns the bold headland ; but that place, which had been successively a Roman fortress, a state prison, and a tower of the marauding Saracens, was in the days of King Charles a little castle, occupied by an Angevin garrison, and some obstinate adherents of the late king, Manfred, who sighed away the days of captivity, where the last of the Roman Emperors had pined and died.

The French warriors were gazing with elated hearts at the chase the flag of Anjou was giving that of Arragon, when Brasfort, the commander of the garrison, happening to turn his eyes in the direction of Bauli, suddenly exclaimed——

"Why, who are these that come at such headlong speed along the hill's side, and seem so mindless of their horses' wind and their own necks ?"

"That foremost cavalier rides fast, but not well," said one of

his troop, watching the page, who was now near the tower ; " that is but an unsteady seat he has in saddle ; and what experienced horseman would gallop up a hill like this ! By the rood ! the palfrey is a gallant one, but he will rue this day's work—see his smoking flanks, and the white foam on his coal-black breast !"

" I see—I see !" said Brasfort ; " and, as I live, that old fellow who would come more slowly after him, if his steed would let him, is the silken old De Beaulx, who hath deemed one battle day in his life enough ; and ever since he shouted ' Montjoie, Chevaliers !' on the plain of Grandella, hath subsided into a sleek, delicate, prattling man of the court. The youth will be some hopeful page of the court ; but he ought to sit his horse better than that !"

" The springal ought to be buffeted for treating his palfrey thus,\*" replied the soldier, with that regard for the noble animal natural to one who had passed a good part of his life in the saddle.

" But before we chide we must welcome the chamberlain of our gallant Prince on our threshold," said Brasfort ; and descending from the wall, he hastened to the tower gate, before which both of the hurried horseman now arrived.

" Hail to you, my Lord De Beaulx !" said Brasfort, advancing to the breathless chamberlain ; " it is long since I have seen you. My old solitary tower here is somewhat out of the beat of your courtiers, but you are right welcome ! By the Saints and you have ridden well ! I did not think there was such speed in you since you have left the coat of mail for the mantle—but I suppose you would fain see our galleys take those runaways !"

" Salve ! salve !" replied the courtier in a condescending tone, as he recovered his breath, and entered with his companion into the fortress. " In good truth, Brasfort, I have been ridden unto the death—I am most anxious to see my royal master's exploits, and——"

" How ! is Prince Charles in the chase ?—does that royal banner indeed denote his presence ?" inquired the captain.

" Verily it doth," said the chamberlain ; " the lion hath gone forth, but——"

“Your Prince is chasing in that galley!” exclaimed Brasfort, addressing his soldiers, and paying little respect to the loquacities of the chamberlain; “Hurra for Anjou and Prince Charles!”

The captain’s shouts were repeated, until the old walls of the tower seemed to tremble with their echoes. As they died away, the querulous voice of the old courtier, who had never ceased speaking, was heard by the now attentive Brasfort. “The day is of the hottest, the hour of refocillation is past, and I am fasting; gallant captain, I will intrude on your hospitality,—you will have fish from the Lake of Fusaro (a very delightful neighbour, be it said, Messer Brasfort!) and a wild bird or so from the woods of Patria, or perhaps a roe-buck from Astroni, and a draught of good Falernian. I am not dainty—I am an old soldier, you know, and we had but short commons and bad cooking the days before the battle of Benevento—and——”

“If he gets to the battle of Benevento,” said the page, in a playful whisper to Brasfort, “we are lost: so prithee take *him* where he may eat, and *me* where I can see the galley of my Prince.”

“First let me assist you to dismount, gentle youth,” said the captain, who for the last few moments had been gazing on the face and form of the page with curiosity and surprise, and who now, as he held the palfrey’s bridle and the stirrup, and received a gentle weight on his arm, felt instinctively and certainly the presence of woman. And the page who had ridden so hard, whose horsemanship they had so criticised, was indeed none other than a young and lovely female, whose peculiar situation, and her heroic devotion to her lover Prince Charles, might extenuate the illegitimacy of her connexion with him.

The chamberlain had now also put foot to ground. These two visitors presented a curious contrast to the rough, half-iron clad warriors that occupied the tower, and of whom some had left gazing at the fleets to gratify their curiosity by looking at them in the court. The slight aerial figure of the page was simply and elegantly attired; a dark green mantle, with a narrow silver fringe at the skirt and collar, descended to the knee; broad, loose brache, or trowsers, of a light fawn colour, which were contracted at the

ankle, left exposed prettily wrought sandals, that were bound round the ankle and over the instep with clasps of bright silver ; a narrow white collaret, curiously embroidered with silks of various dyes, fell from the neck, a little way over the shoulders ; and the head was covered with a broad green cap, which hung gracefully on one side, whilst a raven-black plume floated on the other. Beneath this dark cap and sable plume, and within the frame, as it were, of her own jet-black hair, which, dishevelled and unconfined, fringed her cheeks, and fell in luxuriant ringlets down her back, her face, always of the fairest, showed most exquisitely white and delicate. It was shaded, but it shone out like a candid lily from the gentle shadow of a green sward bank.

The appearance of the chamberlain was much more elaborate : his mantle and his hose were slashed and parti-coloured beyond the power of the pen to describe ; the yellow boots he wore, though not carried to that excess they were at a later period by the French, when the curved-up toe almost intruded on the knee, were salient at their points, like the slippers of a Chinese mandarin ; over the mantle he wore an ermine tippet, which covered his shoulders, and above the tippet again a white ruff, so ambitious in its dimensions, and so starch, that had it not been for a high-crowned, conical hat that surmounted it, it would have given to his head the appearance of John the Baptist's in a charger ; a sharp peaked beard, and a shrivelled face, painted to conceal the ravages of years, reposed formally within this ruff, and its expression was a singular compound of luxury and dignity, frivolity and formality. In his hand he held a long white rod, and with this, and the air of one accustomed to exact the etiquettes of a court, he was now pointing forward to the door of the tower.

"In an instant," said Brasfort, who at length had detached his wondering, admiring eyes from the page, "you shall find within our walls, poor though they be, wherewith to satisfy hunger and thirst ;" and then, leading the way to his apartment, he muttered to himself, "An indigestion to the old courtly glutton who can think of feasting at a moment like the present !"

The page, who remained in the court, did not await the return

of the captain to conduct her to a place whence she could see the naval chase ; but ascending with elastic step a flight of stone stairs, after some of the soldiers, she anon took her post on the outer wall of the fortress, which overhung the deep, blue bay, and commanded an uninterrupted view. Here, however, she was presently joined by Brasfort, and with every soul in the fortress except De Beaulx, a menial who waited on him, and some of the state prisoners confined in the back part of the building, she continued to watch the progress of Prince Charles with intense anxiety.

The two fleets were now close under Cape Miseno ; and from their numbers and arrangement, and the lifefulness on board of each, presented a most animating spectacle.

The galleys of the Prince swept on their oars in one wide line, of which the royal standard of Anjou occupied the middle point ; whilst those of Di Loria went on in closer order, and in the figure of a wedge, whose rear angle was formed by the strong and lofty galley of the daring admiral, the shadow of whose flag-staff sometimes fell close before the prow of the Prince, so near were they together. On the decks of either fleet were seen crowding groups of knights and warriors, in bright armour, and their shields hung on the sides of the galleys, and reflected in the smooth glassy waves, contributed to form a martial but a beautiful picture. Ever and anon some impatient hand would draw a bow on board the Neapolitan fleet, but the arrow would either patter against the ranged shields and fall into the sea, or strike innocuously above head, in the masts or rigging of the enemy.

So perfect was the noon-day stillness on that romantic cape, and so admirable a conductor to sound the waters of the quiet sea, that not only the roll of the galley oars in their thules, and the striking of their long blades in the foaming water, but almost every shout and word of command, or taunt, or ribald jest from French, Neapolitans, Sicilians, and Catalans, could be distinctly heard at the old fortress.

The enchanting scenery the cape commanded, and which was soon to witness scenes of blood and cowardice, or treachery, was such as no mortal pen or pencil can describe or paint ; but no eye

that hath once seen it can ever forget. In face of the cape, across a frith scarcely three miles in breadth, were the low, green island of Procita, and the towering peaked volcanic heights of Ischia; beyond them, and far away to the right over the blue sea, Ponza, Ventoteno, and others—a group of islets that seemed floating between air and ocean;—to the left was the memorable island of Capri, with its precipitous sides and rugged outline; and then the hills of Sorrento, which in after years was to be the birthplace of Tasso, who all but conveyed in verse the transporting beauties of nature, and the scenes of his early days; and then the gigantic Monte Sant' Angelo, crowned as with a spiritual glory, by a pure, white hermitage: and then the volcano of Vesuvius! and nearer at hand were the ancient Puteoli, the Patrician Baia, the whitened edges of the extinct volcano Solfatara; and the hills that bore the vines whose ruddy juices cheered the emperors and senators of Rome, and the Plinies in their philosophical retreat. And still nearer was the Lake Avernus, a fair blue basin occupying the crater of another extinct volcano, on whose farther shore the imposing ruins of a Roman temple eyed themselves in its waters—Avernus, that will live in the undying strains of the *Æneid*, when earthquake, and eruption, the inroads of the sea, or the other accidents to which this singularly mutable part of Italy are subject, shall have choked it up, or effaced every trace of its form and existence; and in the rear of the cape were the melancholy hills of Cuma, and the Sibyl's cave, to which Virgil hath given the same immortality.

Such a region as this, which, of all the countries of the vast world, is that where volcanoes, history, and poetry have left the most numerous and enduring traces,\* ought not to have been the scene of merely mortal contention; or, if it had, it ought to have witnessed some glorious and patriotic struggle, which should restore freedom to fair Italy, and raise "*La vedova, povera, squallida e*

\* "*Enfin la contrée de l'univers où les volcans, l'histoire et la poésie ont laissé le plus de traces.*"—*Corinne ou l'Italie*.

Madame de Stael chose the Promontory of Misenum for the scene of her heroine's improvisation, and she could not have made a better choice.



mesta,"\* to that pre-eminence among the nations to which Nature destined her. But the contest that now began was not of this character, nor had the beauties of nature, or poetry, or historic lore, that crowd here so as to bewilder the heart and intellect, any part in the anxious minds of the spectators on the promontory.

On a sudden the fleet of Di Loria, who had artfully drawn the Prince out in a sea whence retreat would be difficult, and succour impossible, laid upon their oars. The next minute, flanked by his strongest galleys, Di Loria turned his iron prow against the galley of Prince Charles, whilst the mass of his fleet seemed prepared to make a charge on the same devoted vessel, and a few galleys only stretched out in line before the rest of the Neapolitans.

The invention of artillery had not yet changed the tactics of warfare. The fleet of Di Loria, so suddenly and unexpectedly from fugitives become assailants, pressed on the enemy much after the manner of the ancient Roman galleys, striving to break them with their sharp, iron-armed prows, or to lay themselves alongside, where they might charge and fight hand to hand. The hollow-sounding, rude percussion of these iron beaks on the prow and flanks of the royal galley were soon awfully audible to the astonished spectators ; but as the flower of the French chivalry fought by the side of their Prince, the Sicilians and Catalans in vain endeavoured to board or strike the royal standard. But on the other part of the Anjou line, the galleys of the Sorrentini, and other people of the kingdom, much abler sailors than the French, who were essentially out of their element, had little of the courage or ardour in the cause that animated the knights, at once gave way before the Sicilians and Catalans, and turning, fled across the bay, as the Egyptians in the Ambracian gulf from the side of the doomed Antony.

"By my soul, they retreat ! the cowards and traitors flee without a blow, and leave their Prince !" cried Brasfort ; and in the paroxysm of his rage, he threw the truncheon he held in his hand far over the waves, in the direction of the recreant Sorrentines.

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\* Petrarca.

"Ay!" cried a voice within a cell of the tower, "even as the false Apulian barons—accursed for ever be the recollection!—deserted a better prince on the field of Benevento."

"Benevento! who speaks of the battle of Benevento?" ejaculated old De Beaulx, who at length had left his refection, and come to watch his master's progress and look after the page. That fond creature, whose heart had been buoyed up by the confident hope that her royal lover was to triumph, and who had gazed till now without speaking or moving, turned round at the voice of the chamberlain, and saying in a hollow tone of voice, "He is lost! my Prince is betrayed and lost!" caught, pale as ashes and almost fainting, at his arm for support.

The condition of the impetuous, unreflecting Charles seemed at this moment indeed a desperate one. The hoarse voice of Di Loria from his stern-gallery was distinctly heard calling to his fleet:—"Let the fugitives alone—seize the nobler prize, the Prince!—every galley against that royal standard!—a cup of gold to him who lowers it!" and with a rapidity of manœuvre, and a skill the French did not possess to oppose to it, the Sicilians and Catalans threw off the vessels that were still true and staunch, and closed round that of the Prince.

"Perdition on this foul, cowardly, unmanly mode of fight!" exclaimed Brasfort, who had bitten his lips till they bled; "the sea and the sickening boat were not made for the chivalry of France! Why did our Prince adventure in so dirty a game!"

"Oh for the fair battle-plain to bear our chargers' hoofs, that we might shout 'Montjoie to the rescue! a rescue!' cried one of the hardy warriors.

"The foul thieves will take or slay our Prince!—See! they have so hemmed in his galley, that it cannot stir an oar!" exclaimed another.

"And so vindicate the wrongs of Suabia—the death of the brave Manfred—the murder of the innocent Conradin, and the bloody executions, the proscriptions, and imprisonment of those who were rue to their masters!" cried aloud the same voice that had spoken before, from the cell in the tower.

At another moment, such words of a certainty would not have gone unpunished, but now the attention of the garrison was too completely absorbed to allow them to attend to a captive brawler. The lofty galley of Di Loria now seemed lashed alongside the Prince's whilst another strong Catalan was taking him on the other flank. From the deck of each of the assailants the most desperate efforts were made at boarding—some twice or thrice, a handful of men did effect a descent on the royal vessel: but they were again driven back whence they came, or thrown into the sea by the French knights and the barons that surrounded Charles.

These bold warriors in "morion and greave, and shirt of twisted mail," and whose offensive arms also were superior to those of Di Loria's mariners, would still have held the battle in suspense; but the admiral exclaiming, 'Cease this fight, and sink the royal galley! riddle her sides, that down she may go!' the Sicilians and Catalans drew back on their oars; and then with all their might, and in different directions, rowed against the ill-fated vessel, striking it with their sharp prows. At the same time, some expert Sicilian swimmers dived from Di Loria's ship, and coming up unperceived under the projecting stern of the royal galley, began to perforate it with sharp instruments.

The effects of this mode of attack, where the assailants were unexposed and the assailed beaten without the satisfaction of giving a blow for it, were soon visible. The sea-water rushed with tremendous rapidity into the galley, which became uneasy, vibrated, and swung round.

"By Heaven! they indeed sink the royal vessel! Our Prince will not even have the satisfaction of a warrior's death; he will be drowned like a dog!" cried Brasfort, walking up and down the rampart with the most agitated steps. But in a few minutes, when the riddled bark was pitching for its final descent into the mysterious depth of ocean, and not till then, Prince Charles exclaimed from its giddy poop,—“We are your prisoners! let me surrender to a knight, however!—I will sink with the ship ere I give up my sword to an ignoble foe!”

Di Loria instantly laid his galley near, and making himself

known to the Prince from its deck, presently received on board the royal captive, with Renaud Gaillard the Grand Admiral of Provence, the Counts of Cerra, of Brenna and Monopello, and the other noble knights who had fought for Anjou. Scarcely had they quitted the royal galley, when down she went, with her proud banner with her; for the Sicilians had not time to tear it from its staff; and after a hollow murmur, a bubbling and a flash of froth, the tranquil sea flowed over the magnificent war-ship.

The page, who had long stood with haggard eyes and clasped hands stretched towards him whom she would have saved with her life, but who had kept her senses even at the moment of his most imminent danger, now that she saw him safe, safe at least for the present, staggered and fainted, and would have fallen over the steep rampart, had it not been for one of the soldiers, who, more active than the chamberlain, rushed and caught her in his arms.

When the disguised fair one recovered, she might have blushed to find herself unbonneted and unbuttoned, with her feminine flow of hair, and neck and snowy bosom exposed among the warriors, who were sprinkling her with cool water; but one absorbing feeling rendered her almost insensible to the gentle instincts of her sex; and raising herself on her elbow, she looked, unheeding those around her, over the wide blue sea, where the Sicilian admiral was carrying away captive her Prince and lover.

Contrary to her expectations, and to those of all present in the fortress of Miseno, who concluded Di Loria would at once make way for Sicily, she saw his proud fleet, with a train of conquered galleys in their rear, boldly returning whence they had come, into the bay of Naples. She watched them in silence, until she saw them pass with a display of triumph the old town of Pozzuoli, and shape their course for the pleasant promontory of Posilippo. Then she turned to De Beaulx, who, like everyone present, was almost stupefied by the unexpected turn events had taken, and said: "Let us to horse, we have no farther business here; to horse! to horse! I will yet see my Prince, or die in the attempt!"

The chamberlain, whose bones still ached with the rapid ride

of the morning, and who had not, like his companion, an absorbing intensity of moral feeling to make him insensible to personal incommunities, and who dreaded so speedy a repetition of fatigue; for the events we have described occupied scarcely more time than we have taken in writing the description; waved his long white wand, but neither stirred a step nor spoke a word.

The coal-black eye of the lady began to cast glances, in which anger was mixed with impatience, when the afflicted Brasfort, who could not help feeling her exquisite beauty even at a moment of dismay like that, approached and addressed her in a tone of respect, inspired by her devotedness to the Prince, and which concealed to his eyes the unseemliness of her disguise, and her condition, which could but be that of Charles's paramour.

"Fair lady," said he, "your fatigued palfreys have still need of rest, but before sunset you shall depart; by that time I can have made some necessary arrangements here, and I will bear you company with a warrior or two, to see you in safety, and learn to what this melancholy event will tend in Naples, where the minds of men are ever fickle, and where are so many enemies to King Charles of Anjou."

"At sunset! not before sunset? Brave warrior! it is an age till then! See—the fleet already approaches the island of Nisita—'twill soon be hid from our sight, and I would be near it, near him!" said the lady hurriedly.

"It shall be *before* sunset, it shall be as soon as we possibly can," replied Brasfort; "but, in the mean time, honour my humble refectory; you are fasting, and will ill bear the fatigues of the long ride!"

"A glass of water to cool my burning mouth," said the passionate young creature; "but speak not of food, I will taste none;" and she spoke in a lower voice; "but tell it not to yon timid old man, or he may interfere with my resolves; I will take none until I take it with Prince Charles!"

The kind-hearted soldier, after having in vain striven to induce her to eat, were it but a morsel of bread, went and brought himself the cool water in a silver drinking cup, and then left her to make

his arrangements in the garrison. She continued gazing on the fleet until it disappeared, galley after galley, behind the projecting cape ; and then with a desolate, but impatient heart, sat herself down on the rampart whence she had witnessed her lover's captivity.

At length the wished-for moment of departure arrived ; and as the sun was setting in the direction of the sublime height of Ischia, and the purple-tinted mountains threw their shadows over the plain and the sea, with her starch companion, and Brasofrt and five well-appointed cavaliers, the lady rode from the Cape of Miseno towards Naples. They went on at a quick pace, and, save when engaged in harassing speculations as to what fate the Prince would meet from enemies, cruel in themselves and on whom cruelty had been so often exercised by the Anjou party, in dead silence. Brasfort could not help reading in the faces of many he met, an expression of malignant satisfaction ; and when beyond Pozzuoli, and on the hills that there rise close above the sea-beach, their only road, he saw a group of disaffected peasants assembled, who hooted and insulted them with their joy at what had happened, he congratulated himself that he had come with an escort, as without it the lady and the chamberlain, obnoxious from the court dress he wore, might have been exposed to injuries more serious than words.

Before they reached the grotto of Posilippo, the long subterranean road leading from Pozzuoli, which was not illuminated by pendant lamps as now, the shades of night had closed in ; and when they entered the grotto, where a more than cimmerician darkness reigned even at noon-day, the hearts of all the party were sensible of a redoubled depression, and a feeling of awe and superstitious terror. The heart of the woman and the lover, after such a tragical bereavement as she had experienced that day, might well be the most susceptible ; and as the red torch, which one of the warriors had provided himself with at the village that stands by the end of the grotto, flickered in the breeze, showing with grotesque light the sepulchral horrors of the place, for a few yards before and beside her, and no more ; as that night-breeze moaned

in the caves and deep cavities that branch off from the sides of that subterranean passage ; and as the beat of the horses' hoofs on the hollow tufo were re-echoed by those caverns with singular effect, it seemed to her ear as if she heard the mopings of evil spirits, or the lamentations of human beings in torture and death. Presently a distinct human voice, that the echoes of the cavern played with most capriciously, sounded on her ear, and like the voice of her lover dying among his foes, or calling for her help. It was a benighted peasant returning from the city, whither he had been to get news, and who shouted to the approaching cavaliers, that he might not be crushed by their horses in that narrow dark passage.

"Whence comest thou, lout?" cried the foremost warrior with the torch, which he lowered to the peasant's affrighted countenance.

"From Naples, great Captain!" was the timid and respectful reply.

"And where are the Sicilian thieves?" cried Brasfort.

"After sailing in front of the town to show they had taken Prince Charles and his ships, they went across the bay, and their galley lights are now to be seen opposite to Naples, between Stabia and Castellamare," hesitatingly returned the peasant; and he was allowed to continue his way with a "*buona notte*," and a recommendation to the Madonna of those who, durst he have spoken his heart's wish, he would have recommended to a very different personage.

The lady sighed to be disengaged from the horrid gloom and chill of the grotto ; but being obliged to go at the slowest pace, it was yet some time ere she emerged, with a feeling of comparative relief, under the ancient tomb on the hill above the grotto's entrance, which it is a delightful delusion to deem the tomb of Virgil.

The travellers were now soon within the populous city, where the greatest agitation, proceeding from a variety of political and personal feelings, prevailed. The corners of the great streets, the public squares, and the hostelrys, all seemed crowded ; and men whispered thoughts to each other which it would have been

dangerous to divulge to the partisans and soldiers of Anjou, who were patrolling the town in evident apprehension of some popular revolt. Brasfort went with the captain of one of these parties to the palace, where the members of government, and many of the barons of the kingdom who happened to be in the capital at this astounding crisis, had assembled in council; and the lady and the chamberlain took their way to the quiet, retired suburb of Poggio Reale, where an elegant small house, secluded in a grove or labyrinth of acacias and orange trees, received them.

In this retreat, which Charles, to avoid public remark and the eyes of his father and family, had chosen for his bower of love, De Beaulx, who had the somewhat dubious distinction of being a confidant, and taking care of his heart's idol during the not unfrequent absences of the Prince, and who had that morning been reluctantly induced by her prayers to let the disguised mistress follow to see the issue of the pursuit, now left her, with many injunctions and prayers that she would remain quiet until intelligence were obtained and he returned to her.

And the fair object of all this solicitude, and of Charles's enduring affection, was, despite of the severe but necessary restrictions of society, deserving of them. The orphan daughter of one of the Italian professors the munificence of the polished Manfred had established at the university of Naples his father Frederic had erected, the beautiful Fidelia, had attracted the admiration, and fallen into the hands of the Prince at so early an age that she was scarcely sensible of the impropriety of her position. She had been educated with a care rarely bestowed in those ages on females, even of royal birth: to exquisite personal beauty she united an elegance of deportment, a gracefulness that displayed itself even in the most familiar actions; she spoke music, she looked love—and the love that warmed the heart that beat beneath that gentle-looking bosom, partook of the character of heroic virtue. This she now showed.

Long before the grey dawn broke on a night of restlessness and anguish, the fair Fidelia, treading tip-toe not to wake the domestics, who might remonstrate, or even prevent her flight, passed the



pleasant marble hall of the elegant villa, and rushing from its pillared portico, and across the fragrant grove where her lute had so often delighted the ears of her royal lover, took a solitary path which led over the plain that extends, between Mount Vesuvius and the city of Naples, to the sea-shore. Early as it was, she met several peasants carrying fruit and vegetables to the market in the city; and none of these could help gazing with surprise, and a sort of idle, half-unconscious interest at the hurried steps and striking appearance of the young page, for she still wore that disguise which was essential to her scheme.

By the shore of the bay where the shrunken river Sebeto pours its minute volume of water into the sea, she found a moored skiff, and, a few steps off, a fisherman's hut. The tenants of the latter she aroused. "I will give thee this purse of gold," said she, holding it before the but half-awake eyes of a grey-headed mariner;—"I will give thee this purse of gold, an' thou wilt but carry me thither—to the galleys of Di Loria!"

"A purse of gold—Di Loria—galleys," muttered the stupefied wight.

"Ay! a well-filled purse!" said Fidelia; and she poured out its contents in her pretty palm.

The fisherman rubbed his eyes, and looked as though he were bewitched, but his fears checked his cupidity.

"If I go thither, gentle sir," said he, "there into the lion's mouth, I shall have my boat, my only wealth save this hut, and yonder fishing nets, taken by the Sicilians."

"But here is gold enough," said Fidelia impatiently, "to pay for a dozen such barks as thine! take it, hide it here, and pledge thine oath to carry me where I bid."

"But, generous sir, Di Loria may take me and my son prisoners with him to Sicily, and then, where the use of our gold?"

"Let thy son stay where he is, and come thou alone with me; thou canst land me there, under the cliffs of Vico, near the Sicilian fleet: with captives such as they have, they are not likely to attend to such as thou and I."

"But on my return I may be hanged by the Angevins for practising with the enemy," replied the timid old man.

"O that I could manage a boat as I can sit a horse!" thought *Fidelia*; and then turning on the old fisherman with eyes that flashed with impatience and coming anger, she said, "Wilt thou, old coward! gain this purse of gold, or shall I go elsewhere? there are many boats between this and the mole of *Naples*, and doubtless many a mariner who would do my bidding for half this sum!"

"I will do it—I will go, father," said the fisherman's son, whose spirit was not depressed by the caution incident to old age; but on his speaking, the affections of nature rose in the old man's heart, and gave him the courage he wanted.

"No! not so, *Nicolò*," said he; "thou art young and healthy, and more of value than I: shouldst thou be lost, thy mother and thy sister would have none to protect them, and I should die of grief. Besides, thou art more likely to attract the attention of the *Sicilians* and to excite the suspicions of the *Angevins* than I, a poor, weak old man. Say not a word, *Nicolò*, but put the oars and sail into the bark, for I will earn the gold of this noble youth."

The son obeyed: the purse given to the father, on his solemnly vowing to do the behest of his passenger as far as in him lay, was remitted to his custody; and embarking, the grey-headed fisherman and *Fidelia* glided from the mouth of the little *Sebeto* into the open bay. They had scarcely left the shore when day began its rapid dawn, and soon the glorious summer sun rose between *Vesuvius* and the *Tifata* mountains. As its light dissipated the vapours and the gloom that hung on the sides of the mountains, and the port of *Castellamare*, she saw to her horror, that the galley fleet was not there; but running her eyes along the rocky coast, she saw it farther off, quietly at anchor near *Vico*. The object that had carried *Di Loria* to *Castellamare* was to release the *Princess Beatrice*, the daughter of *King Manfred*, and the sister of *Costanza*, now *Queen of Arragon* and of *Sicily*, and this having

been obtained, by the commands to the governor of the castle, of Prince Charles his prisoner, Di Loria had shifted his position in the night.

A breeze never fails to accompany the sun's rising at this season of the year in the Gulf of Naples. Fidelia felt somewhat restored as it cooled her fevered cheek ; and the fisherman, to avail himself of it, spread his small triangular sail : the light skiff flew like a sea-bird over the bay, keeping near shore, by the roots of the volcano, and it passed the lovely spots where the ancient Herculaneum had been covered by an eruption, and where the modern palaces and groves of Portici had not yet risen before the sunrise breeze, which is always short, died away.

The old man had now to labour on his oars, and exposed to the full glare and heat of a summer sun, without a breath of wind, without an inch of shade, the situation of Fidelia was a most painful one. She had tasted no food ; but a faintness now overcame her, and with a faltering voice she craved a little water. The fisherman produced his earthen bottle ; it had been scorched by the almost tropical heat of the sun ; the water almost parboiled, sickened on her delicate stomach, and she was about to faint, when she saw Di Loria's galleys, from which her eyes had never been for a moment detached, moving from their anchorage. This sight, and the alarm it created in her loving bosom, thoroughly recalled her.

"Blessed Madonna ! they are going, and we shall be too late ! Canst thou not row faster, old man ?" she exclaimed wildly.

"I will do my best," said the old man, "though my arms are already tired."

"Talk not of fatigue ! ply thine oar, ply it well ! and in addition to the purse, I will give thee this, an' thou but gain the galleys ere they go !" and Fidelia took a massive gold chain from her neck.

"If the galleys move, it is impossible that I should catch them in a bark like this," said the fisherman ; "but perhaps they are not going—not all going, for I see the admiral's flag motionless there under the cliffs of Vico."

But the delicious hope these words inspired in the breast of

Fidelia was soon dispelled by the projection of her long sweep of oars, and Di Loria's galley followed those who had already left their anchorage.

"Merciful God!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands, "shall I lose him! lose him! and so near to him! Canst not row faster, old man—faster, I say!" And she who on every other occasion of her life had been so considerate of the comfort and welfare of others, would have worked the mariner to death.

But the old man was already exhausted; the perspiration dropped in large globes from his sun-bronzed face and breast and sinewy arms, and saying he must have a minute's rest, he drew his oars within the boat.

"Give me the oars whilst thou takest breath—give me the oars!" said Fidelia, and she took them and rowed, unskilfully indeed, but vigorously, until she was bathed in perspiration; her delicate hands were blistered. The old man relieved her as soon as he could; as he rowed, however, he observed that the galleys did not appear to be shaping their course out of the gulf, and presently remarked joyfully to Fidelia, that they were coming to, off the town of Sorrento.

"A blessing on thee for those words of comfort!" she exclaimed; and then dropping on her knees in the boat, and raising her hands to Heaven, she prayed most fervently that Di Loria might linger yet awhile until she reached Sorrento; but at every motion of the galleys her fear returned.

The Sicilian, however, did linger there, until creeping timidly under the cliffs that rise perpendicularly on this side of the bay, and almost expiring with fatigue, the old mariner landed her at the shallow cove which forms the port of Sorrento. She was most fortunate too in the moment of her arrival; for as she landed, a procession of Sorrentines was descending the steep stairs which lead through a most picturesque ravine, from the town to the shore; and these worthy individuals, the magnates of the place, alarmed at the visit of Di Loria, were bent on a propitiatory visit to that dreaded admiral's galley. With little difficulty she obtained permission from the honourable deputation to accompany them in their boat; and with a fair display of fruit and flowers, not intended

for the captive prince, *Fidelia* and the *Sorrentines* ascended the side of the *Sicilian* victor.

The eye of the impassioned lover sought on the crowded deck, and found at once, with a gush of rapture that had well-nigh extended her lifeless upon it, the person of Prince Charles ! But the eyes of the deputies, in their search of *Di Loria*, were less ready and less correct ; for, seeing the prince in splendid armour, surrounded by his proud barons, and concluding that the finest and most honoured person there must be the admiral, they took Charles for *Di Loria*, and addressed to the son of their king the speech they had studied and prepared for his greatest enemy.

All kneeling at the feet of the Prince, the orator of the municipal deputation, after having cleared his voice with a sonorous hem ! thus delivered himself !—

“Messer the Admiral, deign on the part of thy town of *Sorrento*, to accept this fruit and flowers, and these fine *palombole* figs—and take these two hundred *agostari* of gold for hose money ; and may it please God that as thou hast taken the son, so mayst thou take the father ; and be it graciously known to thee, that we *Sorrentines* were the first to run away in the fight.”\*

The laughable effect of this mistake was irresistible ; and even the Prince, spite of his calamities and the menacing aspect of the future, joined the laugh, and turning to *Di Loria*, who stood by in simple seamanlike attire, exclaimed, still laughing—

“*Per Dio ! Messer Di Loria*, and these are very faithful subjects to my lord the king !”

It was beyond even *Neapolitan* impudence to face out an affair like this ; and so the ambassador and his kneeling companions arose and hastily retired, amidst the shouts and laughter of all on board, wondering, however, as they went, how so great and potent a signior as *Di Loria* should wear so shabby a jerkin.

\* The words of the chronicler, besides being quaint and characteristic, are an early and curious specimen of the *Pugliese* or *Neapolitan* dialect. “*Dicendo : Messer l' Ammiraglio, come ti piace, da parte del comune tuo di Sorriento scipati queste palombol e, eprendi agostari per taglio di calze, e piasesse a Dio, com' hai preso lo figliuolo, avesse lo patre ; e facemoti assappare che fumo li primi che voltammo !*”

The laugh of the Prince, however, could not end otherwise than in sad reflexion, and he had begun to muse on the fickleness of subjects, the probable faithlessness of friends, now that a cloud was on his fortunes, when turning round he saw a faithful, fond eye beaming on his—and he knew his *Fidelia*, in spite of her disguise, at a glance.

“What, my true one!” said he, as, insensible to the remarks and surprise he thus excited, he rushed to where she stood, and took her sunburnt, blistered hand in his;—“what! are thou here? but how and wherefore?”

“To follow my Prince to the dungeon or the grave!” replied the devoted girl; “but speak to those who would know my business here, or force me from thee, whom I cannot leave and live!”

Charles whispered a few words in her ear, and then going to *Di Loria*, requested that he would not deprive him of the society of so faithful a page. The Admiral was courteous to his royal captive, and gave the permission he asked, without caring for the words of one of his officers, who said to him—“It is no page, but some love-mate!”

Prince Charles then retired with *Fidelia* into the cabin of the galley, and there, after having related her adventures since they parted, and wept with joy on his bosom, she partook of those refreshments she so much needed.

About an hour before noon, when another periodical wind began to blow, *Di Loria*’s galleys sailed from *Sorrento* and the Bay of *Naples*, to carry their prisoners and prizes to *Messina*. But it was not until the fourth day of their summer voyage, when winds were scarce and brief, that the Prince and his companion, who was ever at his side, entered the rapid, narrow, and beautiful channel that separates *Sicily* from *Calabria*, and saw the fleet come to anchor in *Messina*’s commodious port.

Nothing could surpass the joy or the applause with which the victorious *Di Loria* was received by the *Messinese*, who, already warned of his brilliant successes over their detested enemy by one of his light courier-barks, had prepared for him a triumphal entry,

and had been for some hours, and almost to a man, gathered on the marine walls to watch his approach.

Before the galleys came to anchor, they were surrounded by speronari and other boats, filled with admiring and impatient friends : as they entered the port, the air was rent with the acclamations of "Viva Di Loria !" and now, as he set foot on shore, followed by his royal and noble captives, the whole population of the town, men, women, and children—the bedridden, who could scarcely drag themselves along on the support of friendly arms ; and infants, who cried in alarm at the astounding shouts of joy and triumph, crowded on his path, which was strewed with laurel and with flowers, and here and there crossed by triumphal arches. But hatred against the Angevins was as deep a feeling in the breasts of the Messinese, as admiration of Di Loria. After the massacre of the Palermitan vespers, Messina, the second city on the island, and which had acted against the French with as much vigour and, be it said, with as much barbarity as the capital, had a perilous siege to sustain from the avenging but unsuccessful Charles of Anjou ; and the alarm and the miseries they suffered, when even their women, with dishevelled hair, were obliged to the hard labour of carrying stones and mortar, to strengthen the walls of the town\* against the approach of the Angevins ; and the thousand anxieties and heart-burnings they had felt were fresh in the memory of all, as well as the long account of bloody deeds Prince Charles' father had perpetrated on the unfortunate Suabians, a member of which family was now their queen. Eyes glowed with rage, and no eyes can better express the violent passions of man's nature than those of the Sicillians, were cast on the Prince, and the

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\* Onde si fece una canzone, che disse :  
 "Deh com' egli è gran pietate  
 Delle donne di Messina  
 Veggiendo iscapigliate  
 Portando pietre e calcina"—

E questa canzone si fece per questa cagione.

If these lines were written at the time, as the chronicler seems to state, they are among the earliest specimens extant of Italian poetry.

knights his fellow-prisoners ; nor was it without difficulty that Di Loria saved them from the excesses of popular fury. In several instances, the cries of "Death to the French ! Let us deal with this Carlotto\* and his crew, as when the bells rang vespers at Palermo !" were raised, and echoed by thousands of infuriate voices—and once the anxious Fidelia saw a dagger's point within a yard of the breast of her royal lover, by whose side she walked. But before the scream on her lips escaped her, and ere she could throw herself between the Prince and the weapon, one of the Sicilian captains struck it from the hands of a fanatic partisan of the house of Suabia, who was secured, and prevented from giving further molestation.

But besides the loud and deep curses of hatred and revenge, the cries of triumph, the taunt of vulgar men, the humiliated Prince had another bitter pang to experience, when, at the order of the Messinese magnates, he was separated from his faithful knights, the companions of his misfortunes, and shut up in the strong Castle of Mattagriffone, whilst they were conveyed to another and a worse place of imprisonment within the city. Almost, indeed, had he lost such comforts as he could yet find in the company of the page, and she all her heroic sacrifices, for the Messinese were about to send the pale and heart-breaking Fidelia away with the rest of his suite, when Di Loria begged the Prince might be allowed the services of one youthful and not formidable attendant.

The old Castle of Mattagriffone, within whose gloomy walls the Prince and the page were now immured "*con buone guardie*,"† stood on the declivities of a fair green hill behind Messina, and the lovely views from the grated windows of its cells, of the freely flowing strait, the olive woods, the orange groves, the white walls of Reggio, the rocks of old Scylla, and the vine-covered hills and the towering mountains of Calabria, though they might for moments

\* A contemptuous diminutive of Carlo, frequently applied to Charles of Anjou and his son.

† Muratori, *Annali*, ann. 1284.



soothe, generally increased their irritated sense of closeness and confinement. The gentle, affectionate, untiring ministry of Fidelia, would, however, at times abstract the Prince from his mental sufferings and the harrowing contemplation of the future ; and she, as she busied herself in attendance on him, and forced a gaiety and a hopefulness into her heart to lighten his, would at times become insensible to their wretched condition, and the perils that environed them, and be for minutes—for hours, indeed, happy.

Often as his brain was racked with the thoughts of his own imprudence, that had ruined his fortunes—the fortunes of his noblest and best friends, and entailed perhaps the loss of a kingdom ; as he reflected on what would be the rage of his father whom he had so disobeyed, and as his heart sank in utter despondence, Fidelia would gently lead him to the lattice of his prison, and pointing out the ravishing spectacle of sea and land, and gay blue heaven, would recall to him the existence of that Being, whose ways, inexplicable as they sometimes are, are the ways of mercy. At other times she would cheer the dreariness of the place, and his heart, with music and song ; and words like the following would declare at least the vivacity of her feelings :—

How free, how free the sea fowl spreads his wings !  
 How gaily sails he by this castle wall !  
 And oh ! how blithe the sable *merlo*\* sings  
 His song of freedom on yon poplar tall !

How freely flows glad ocean in his strait, †  
 Glancing in sunlight—rolling rapidly :  
 How freely blows the morning breeze elate,  
 Each zephyr hymning notes of liberty !

And oh ! those clouds across the free blue sky,  
 How flit they onward, silvery and fleet !  
 And oh, how freely rise those mountains high,  
 Heaven at their summit, ocean at their feet !

There's freedom in the air—the sea—the earth !  
 All Nature shares it, and the meanest hind :  
 But thou, my Prince,—my love of royal birth,  
 Art in a dungeon's gloomy walls confined !

\* The black-bird.

† The Faro, or Straits of Messina.

Thou who ruled'st provinces—nay, kingdoms wide,  
 Art pent and cabin'd in a narrow cell,—  
 The knights and dames that gather'd by thy side  
 All, all are gone, but I am with thee still.

I still am with thee, nor my fate would give  
 For all thy soul-felt charms, dear Liberty !  
 My only object, thought, hope, wish, to live  
 With him I love, with him at last to die.

Ay ! sail away, thou saucy, thoughtless bird !  
 I would not follow thee, though thou art bent  
 On to the matchless vale where beauty stirr'd  
 The heart of Dis,\* and she on flowers intent,

Herself the fairest flower, young Proserpine  
 Felt the God's scorching sighs, and sulphurous breath—  
 And as she fainted in his car supine,  
 Let all her gather'd flow'rets fall beneath.

Ay ! sail away ! I envy not thy flight,  
 Although untiringly thy wing it waves  
 O'er Sicily, the sunny and the bright,  
 To Afric's sea, from where Charybdis raves.

No ! though at noon thou stay'st to cool thy beak  
 In Arethusa's fountain of old fame ;  
 Or upward bearing in thy venturous freak,  
 Thou wing'st thy way o'er Ætna's towering flame.

Or downward swooping hoverest awhile  
 By Agrigentum's plain and lone abodes,  
 Where yet in ruin † frown (a wonderous pile !)  
 The God-like temples, men built to their gods.

Proserpine, gathering flowers,  
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis  
 Was gathered.

O Proserpina,  
 For the flowers now, that frighted, thou lett'st fall  
 From Dis' waggon.

† Of the magnificent temples of Agrigentum, one dedicated to Concord is almost entire. Like so many other ancient edifices, it owes its admirable preservation to the circumstance of its having been converted into a Christian church.

No ! though thou streak'st thy plumage 'midst the corn  
That waves where Ceres' capital once stood,\*  
Where, of a goddess, first that art was born  
That gives to man a sweet and bloodless food.

And though thou seek'st at last, when daylight closes,  
Some quiet nook in that sequestr'd vale  
Where Acis loved, amidst a flush of roses,  
His Galatea,—passionate and pale.

I would not follow thee ! nor hither hie  
So far as yon near hill and myrtle brake,  
Where at the noon of night *lucciole*† fly,  
And nightingales their songs of sorrow wake.

I would not cross these iron doors or bars,—  
I could not breathe in other air than this,  
Where beam (my cynosure) my Prince's stars,  
For still his eyes to *me* are stars of bliss !

When life its turmoil and its race hath run,  
And death returns us whence we drew our birth,  
The Prince—the potentate—like lowliest clown,  
Can claim no more than one brief span of earth.

But I—whilst yet life revels in my veins,  
Am e'en contented with a briefer space ;  
Nor ask, of all earth's mountains, valleys' plains,  
A wider circle than my love's embrace.

In this manner the wearying, anxious days wore on ; but the external news that was allowed to penetrate the Prince's confinement, was not of a nature to soothe or revive him. The very day after Charles's signal defeat, his obdurate father, the King, arrived at Gaeta, whence, had he been a little sooner, he might almost have witnessed the fight ; and he brought with him fifty-five armed galleys, besides other vessels, that, had the Prince's imprudence not lost the rest of his fleets, might have given the naval preponderance for the present to the Angevins. When the King learned his son's disobedience and defeat, he was afflicted and enraged to

\* Castro Giovanni, now a romantic little town, is supposed to be the capital of the kingdom of Ceres !

† The fire-flies that abound in Sicily and the South of Italy, and are infinitely more poetical than our glowworms.

the utmost, and exclaimed in the excess of paternal indignation, "O that he were dead! since he broke my commands!"\* but being informed of the little faith of the subjects of the kingdom, and particularly of the population of his capital, who were already running about with the factious cries of "Death to King Charles, and long life to Ruggiero di Loria!" he turned the fires of his wrath against them. He arrived with terror and dismay in his van, and from his proud galley off the port of Naples, he declared his dire intention of never landing at the faithless city, until he had reduced it to ashes. Many of the nobles with him were as incensed and ruthless as he, but some milder spirits pleaded for the beautiful victim.

"'Tis in vain ye plead for the false harlot!" cried Charles of Anjou, whose iron nature had not been softened by years. "Beautiful as she is, I will destroy her, though I may afterwards moan over her, like the avenging husband over the lovely lifeless body of her who has betrayed him! Yes! the flames shall embrace the false one, from the bay's edge to the hill of St. Elmo!"

At this dread moment, when measures were concerting to execute the irate monarch's will, the minister of a spiritual Power, which ever ought to advocate the cause of mercy—the Pope's legate, Gherardo da Parma—with sundry Neapolitan barons whose attachment had never been subject to suspicion, went off to the royal galley, and at their long instances and earnest prayers the doom of the city was revoked. But still, like a more modern sovereign,† whose sex ought to have rendered her less vindictive, Charles would not land until a holocaust had been sacrificed to his vengeance. When one hundred and fifty of the Neapolitans had been put to death he pardoned the rest!

As soon as the feelings of nature, and the considerations of rational policy, surmounted the indignation of the disobeyed, indignant father, King Charles endeavoured, through the medium of

\* "Or foss' egli morto, dapoichè falli nostro comandamento."

† Caroline of Austria, who is universally accused of the dreadful cruelties and executions committed at Naples at the contra-revolution of 1799. See the admirable history of those events by V. Cocco.

the Roman Church, to recover his captive son. To this desired end, two Cardinal legates were despatched by the Pope to Sicily, where they were to labour besides for the general restoration of peace. But the Sicilians were implacable enemies ; the advantages of the war were all on their side ; and though they amused the legates with words and conferences, they had no inclination to treat with the Angevins, or give up their prisoner, the heir to the crowns of Charles of Anjou.

Whilst these semblances of negotiation were pending, the heart of the royal captive alternated between hope and despondency ; but he was crushed with the dead weight of despair when he learned that the legates had withdrawn in disgust from their unprofitable labours, launching as they went from the shores of Sicily a general excommunication against the island ; and, a few days after, that his father had died, more of chagrin and grief and disappointment, than of age or sickness, at the Apulian city of Foggia. What was now to become of the rich and lovely kingdom to which he succeeded ? What was to become of himself ?

The people of Messina were disposed to give a hasty and a fatal answer to the latter query. Their fiery natures were roused to fury by the sentence of excommunication ; and when they learned, at this crisis of their feelings, that their old enemy, Charles of Anjou, had trod the dusky path of death, they resolved that his partisans in their power, and his son too, should follow him.

It was the dead of night ; and the gentle Fidelia was watching over the pale, worn features of her lover, who, after long restlessness, had at length fallen asleep. Her delicate hand shaded a lamp, that its rays might not disturb the unfortunate Prince, to whom sleep was the greatest blessing within his power ; her eyes were fixed on his features, which were frequently agitated as though by troublous dreams ; and as she gazed, comparing the present with the past, and turning with horror from the contemplation of the threatening future, the tears she restrained or concealed when he was awake to see them, flowed in torrents. The stillness of the season and the place was so perfect, that the Prince's breathing, the rippling of the sea in its bold deep channel of the Faro, were

distinctly heard in the cell, which was vast and gloomy, being only lighted by the lamp in her hand, and a smaller cresset that hung at the feet of a huge crucifix, whose blooded, writhed figure it partially displayed with horrid effect. Of a sudden, a murmur, and a noise of rushing footsteps, was heard from the town beneath the castle, and then a roar of voices rose from within the walls of Messina, which had been reposing in the broad moonlight, as tranquil as the slumbering infant on its mother's breast.

"Ah! what sounds are those?" cried the Prince, awaking from his short sleep; "proves my dream true, and come they here to murder me?"

He rose, and with the now trembling companion of his captivity, rushed to the narrow casement of his cell. The sounds that had increased in intensity were here partially reduced to distinct words, and Charles and Fidelia heard the Messinese exclaiming "To the prison! to the prison! and let us slay with our own hands those French villains our laws and governors will not punish for us! To the prison! to the French prison!"\*

The horrid place of captivity of the French knights and the barons, the companions of Charles in his defeat by Di Loria, was not visible from the Prince's prison; but the noise of attack and the most dreadful shouts were presently heard in the direction of the fated building where the unfortunate nobles, roused from their sleep, defended themselves with the resoluteness of desperation.

Harrowed by feelings and apprehensions too dreadful to describe,—trembling, breathless, they listened to the still deepening rumour; and after more than half an hour of this agonizing uncertainty—a half-hour that had been vainly employed by their infuriated, bloody enemies, to subdue the noble prisoners—they heard the Messinese shouting, "Fire! fire! let us set fire to the old prison and burn them in its flames!" Their hearts sickened; but, though the shouts were continued, minute after minute, perhaps a quarter of an hour passed and there were no signs of the horrid

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\* "E corsono alla prigione dove erano i Franceschi, per uccidergli, ed egli difendendosi, misono fuoco nella prigione, e a grande dolore gli feciono morire."

incendiarism—could they not effect their purpose? had they relented of it?

Alas! no. Their sense of smell was presently invaded by a pungent, smouldering odour; a light fleecy wreath of smoke, that gradually darkened and enlarged itself, was carried by the night air past the old castle of Mattagriffone, and in a few more seconds the reflection of a towering flame, and innumerable small falling sparks of fire, struck their horror-fixed eyes. The sparks fell thicker and thicker; the reflection of the flames extended and brightened, until the pale face of the moon, and the twinkling stars, and the blue heavens, were reddened with its hellish blush. The sharp crackling of consuming timber and glowing stone, the hiss and the roar of raging fire, mingled with the shouts of thousands of furious voices; and then there came the shrieks of torture and despair, of those who were perishing by the most horrible of deaths; and then the cries of demoniacal triumph; and then a failing of the reflection, a cessation of the flitting sparks; and a silence, that told the Prince and Fidelia the atrocity was completed.

“Oh! my friends! my true and loving ones! my bold Renaud! my generous Cerra! my devoted Brenna,—all my truest and dearest! is it to a fate like this, my folly hath conducted ye!” exclaimed Charles, scarcely prevented by the aghast and shuddering Fidelia from beating his head against the iron bars of his cell window, and utterly unconscious for the moment of the cries the Messinese were now raising of “To Mattagriffone! to the Castle of Mattagriffone, where we will do the like to the Prince!”

As the devoted Fidelia was holding the hands of her lover, and saying what words she could, the noise drew nearer and nearer, and presently the roar of maddened voices seemed to rise immediately from the front of the old fortress, which was in the opposite direction to their cell, and could not be seen thence. “Death to the Prince! death to the son of Charles of Anjou!” was still the cry; and anon Fidelia heard the clashing of swords, and a rush and a shock that shook the whole edifice.

“They come!” she muttered in an awful tone, and with lips as pale as her white forehead; “they come—my Prince, my love,

must die ! but the same blow shall kill us both !” and she twined her arms round his body, as though she would incorporate, or infuse herself, into that dear being, and be as she was in heart, but one in form with him.

Prince Charles had the courage of the nation and the race from which he sprang ; but quelled by calamity, depressed by captivity, harrowed to the soul’s deepest depth by the fate of his followers, pent-in in that dark cell, with not so much as a dagger in his girdle, with a lovely delicate woman on his bosom, running his perils with him, with the utter impossibility of flight or resistance, with the sounds of death every minute growing nearer and nearer, and louder and louder ;—it was not in human nature to bear all this and passively await the approaches of such a death without trembling. And Charles did tremble, and at length fell on the floor of his cell, with Fidelia still clinging to him like a part of himself.

It was not for either of these to fix the length of the horrid time of suspense that passed ; but it was not more than a quarter of an hour when the roar of voices ceased, or waxed fainter, and the revengeful host that had gathered round *Mattagrifione*, deterred at once by the strength of the fortress, the arrival of some regular troops, and the representations of some of Queen *Costanza*’s ministers, withdrew from the spot and left the Prince in safety, at least for the present. The sufferers rose from the stone floor : Fidelia only to her knees, on which she poured forth a prayer, and a thanksgiving to Heaven for the un hoped-for preservation ; but Charles went to breathe at his cell-window.

Day was now dawning on that night of anguish and horror ; the light of the rapidly coming sun was chasing away the moon and her attendant stars ; the mountains of Calabria rose from their light mantle of shadow and vapour, like giants unrobing themselves ; the walls of Reggio and the Castle of old Scylla smiled in the eye of morning ; the vineyards waved their green tendrils ; the golden fruit began to glow from the groves on the hills ; the sea swept rapidly and gaily, but tranquilly, through the straits ; the birds already sang in the myrtle brakes on the Messina side of the Fare,



and close to the gloomy walls of Mattagriffone, and silence reigned in the populous city at hand. There was nothing to tell of all that had been done, and all that had been suffered, save a fast dissipating wreath of smoke that hung near the scene of the night's atrocious tragedy. When the Prince threw himself on his couch and slept, and woke after awhile, all that had passed seemed but one of those fearful dreams, to whose visitations he had long been familiar, and the tranquil sight of external objects he again took from his casement tended to confirm that such, and no more, was the case.

But though the Prince was thus spared from the ebullitions of popular rage and Sicilian ferocity, it was not intended, or it was not possible, to prevent ulterior measures against him, so deep-seated was the hatred and revenge of the whole island. After mature deliberation it was agreed to appoint a court, which, in appearance at least, should juridically try the royal captive; and to form this court, a Sindaco to act as delegate was named by Palermo, Catania, Syracuse, and every other town and important terra or district of Sicily. These ministers of national animosity met, and after brief discussion accorded with one voice, which was that of the whole island, in a sentence of death against Prince Charles, and that in revenge for the deaths of Manfred and Corradino, his head should be cut off, even as his father had cut off the head of the latter young and innocent Prince.

It was not many days after the night whose horrors we have described, that Prince Charles was warned by the governor of the Castle of Mattagriffone that he must receive a deputation of the Sicilian nation. "Let them come and insult my fallen fortunes!" said the almost heart-broken prince or king: "I cannot choose, and have not the means of making a royal preparation for their reception."

"Still receive them as a Prince!" said the affectionate but high-minded Fidelia; and before the governor returned, ushering in the Sindachi of the island, she placed a stool for Charles to sit upon, covered his shoulders with a royal mantle of violet, embroidered

with lilies of gold,\* and took her post, reverentially as it were, at his left hand.

As these men, who had passed a sentence of blood, approached the royal captive, they showed countenances that denoted they were fully equal to the execution of their sentence. Fidelia, who had been as yet in happy ignorance of her lover's doom, shuddered as she looked at them, and knew their message could but be an evil one. Their robes were close and black; their hats, that no courtesy bade them remove, were high-crowned and broad-brimmed, and shaded their dark-bearded faces, that were otherwise imperfectly seen by the insufficient light that struggled through the narrow casement into the gloomy cell; their dark fiery eyes gazed on the Prince, as tigers on the victims that cannot escape them, and the voice of the president, who read the awful sentence of death, and the voices of the rest, who echoed its most striking and most dreadful passages, had worse than the raven's hoarseness.

"I could die," muttered the Prince: "I could face death, but not thus!" and then overcome by the weaknesses of nature, he wildly exclaimed, "But is there no mercy?—no mercy to extend to a defenceless captive!"

"Ay! such mercy as thou, as thine have blest their foes with,—such mercy as thy accursed father, whose soul is in hell, showed to our gallant Manfred—such mercy as Charles of Anjou vouchsafed the gentle Corradino, when the youth's innocent head was lopped off and fell by the brook that washes the market-place of Naples! But ere that royal head, there fell a glove to the ground, transmitting to others the sacred duty of revenge, and our King Peter of Arragon has taken that glove, and by it thou shalt die, and on the scaffold like the young Suabian!" replied the ferocious Sindachi, who enjoyed as they spoke the abasement of their enemy.

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\* The surcoats and mantles of the royal family of Naples were azure or violet, embroidered with lilies of gold, which in the dresses worn on occasions of peculiar magnificence were edged or seeded with pearls, each fleur-de-lis being surmounted with the label Gules of the Angevine race.

But that abasement was only momentary :—recovering the nobleness of his nature, the Prince said haughtily, and pointing to the door of his cell, “ Be it then so ! and on your heads the guilt of my blood, innocent of the deeds you repeat ! There ! leave me then, that I may yet have time ere I die to petition Heaven for that mercy man refuses me ! ”

The Sindachi, with the governor of Mattagriffone, retired ; the Prince, without moving from his seat, but following them with his eyes, until the cell-door closed between them, then rose, saying with a calm voice, “ Come, my Fidelia, and let us pray ! ” But the maiden had for some time been senseless to all that was passing there, having fainted as the voice of the Sindaco dwelt with horrid emphasis on the concluding words of the death-warrant.

When she recovered from her long and death-like trance, and found herself in the arms of her lover, whom his own inevitable and fast approaching doom could not render insensible to such intense love ;—and when she saw his sunken cheek, and fixed leaden eye, and felt his hand icy cold upon her’s, as though the influences of death were already upon him, she shuddered and wept, and well nigh fainted again. But she rallied her spirits as the Prince said in a tone of voice awful, and utterly unlike any she had ever before heard from him : “ Fidelia, it is meet I prepare myself for a death which is so soon to close a life not long but sinful ! Do not unman me with thy tears ! The sight of them and thy beauty withdraw me even now from the contemplation of immortality ! ”

The devoted girl soon recovered a heroine’s strength of mind, and the sentiments of mingled affection and religion that now animated her might have pleaded before the throne of grace, in favour of a life infinitely more sinful or irregular than her’s had been. “ My Prince,” said she, after a pause, “ surely thine enemies, cruel though they be, will not deny thee the consolations of religion, and the spiritual aid of a priest or monk ! ”

“ I had not thought to ask them another favour or mercy ; but I will petition for as much as this—for a holy man who may hear my confession and give me absolution ere I ascend the scaffold,”

said the Prince ; and going to the door of the cell, he beat upon it, until the noise attracted one of the governor's attendants.

The man carried the Prince's message to his master, and soon after returned with an old man in the simple and picturesque attire of a Franciscan monk.

Whilst the Franciscan was engaged in his holy office, and shrived her royal lover in one dark corner of the cell, Fidelia remained in silent prayer in another : and when confession and absolution were over, they all three knelt together and joined in one fervent supplication. Nothing could be more impressive than the group. The lattice-light, strong where it fell on them now in the middle of the room, but contrasted by deep shadows that occupied the rest of the gloomy sepulchral-looking apartment, displayed the pious countenance, the venerable beard, the shaven head of the monk, and the broad dark folds of his ample drapery ; reposed on the pallid but handsome features of the Prince, who still wore the splendid garb of royalty, and with still more effect on the exquisite, the truly feminine face of the young Fidelia, and her graceful form in the graceful dress of a page. Though devotion was the feeling that gave expression to the countenances of all three, that expression was different in each. In the face of Fidelia a tinge of earthly love—earthly, but so pure and intense as to be almost divine ; and the high determination and unchangeable resolve of one about to devote herself to martyrdom, and to voluntary death, were mingled with the rapt look of religion.

When the monk departed, the Prince, who had made his peace with Heaven, could not avoid being again recalled to earth, as he caught this vivid expression, which still animated the pale and beautiful countenance of his too dear companion ; and he said, for the first time weeping, “ Oh, my Fidelia ! for what fate art thou reserved ? What will they do with thee when I am no more ? ”

She gasped a moment for breath, and then said in a voice that, though nearly a whisper, was so concentrated, so deep and penetrating, that it might almost have been heard through the thick walls of the prison. “ When I reached thee, Prince, on board of Di Loria's galley, after such labours as only love for thee could

have given me strength to endure, I said I was to follow thee to the dungeon or the grave, and I will die when thou dost, or——”

“Fidelia, my love!” interrupted the Prince, grasping her attenuated hand with his, and looking in her eyes, that glowed with a fixity of purpose—“Fidelia, we have sinned together, but we have prayed together, and sought with mingling voices a reconciliation with offended Heaven; then do not risk its wrath and preclude the possibility of our meeting in love and happiness in a better world than this!—mine enemies, barbarous as they are, will not execute thee, and there is none of God’s canons so severe as that against self-destruction!”

“And is it only, thinkest thou, the axe’s edge, or the dagger’s point, or the poisoned bowl, that can kill? is there no such thing as a breaking heart?” She laid her hand upon her stricken bosom, and continued; “Why, I feel even now—but I would not die while thou livest!—that I could lay myself down on that couch and die of a grief whose wound is surer than that of the sword!”

“Fidelia! still my own Fidelia!” exclaimed the Prince, clasping her in his arms, and weeping on her neck. But *she* wept not as she said, “I cannot see it done. No! no! but when the blow of the axe strikes on mine ear, that will kill me! my soul will take its flight with thine, and thy foes may lay our bodies together!”

In discourse like this, or in prayers, the captives passed the rest of the day and part of the night. But in the middle of that fatal, horrid night, which was to be his last, the Prince fell into a sound sleep, that was not even disturbed by the noise of the workmen in the court-yard of the castle, busied in erecting the scaffold for his execution—those sounds only interrupted the awful composure of his companion!

The dawn, the light of day, cheerful as though it summoned to a marriage festival, glanced through the lattice on his couch, but the Prince awoke not; and the morning was considerably advanced, and Fidelia expected at every moment the dread summons—the last—ere he opened his eyes, and sighed, “Would that it were over! Are they not coming yet?”

“Ay, they come! they come!” cried Fidelia, who was at the

moment listening at the cell door, which she now left and rushed to fold her awakened lover for the last time in her fond arms.

The noise of a heavy, opening door echoed along the corridor that ran by the cell; and presently the heavy tread of many feet, and the sounds of voices, were heard drawing nearer and nearer; the clanking chain that secured the cell fell with a horrid sound; the door was about to revolve on its hinges to open—to death! She pressed the Prince closer, convulsively in her arms, her lips, colder than ice, glued themselves to his; the door opened, and men entered the cell.

The haggard eyes of the Prince were astonished by the apparition of a knight in armour, whom he recognised, as he drew nearer, as one of Di Loria's warriors who had behaved courteously to him on board the Sicilian galley.

"I thank my enemies for this!" said he, addressing the knight. "I would surrender to none but a cavalier, when sinking in the gulf of Naples; and 'twere an additional pang to be led to death by those vulgar burghers, the Sindachi, who——"

"Prince Charles!" hastily interrupted the knight, "I never would have accepted such an office; it is not to lead thee to the scaffold that I am here, but to inform thee that thy life is spared!"

"Spared!" muttered Fidelia, who still held the Prince in her embrace. "His life! oh, God of mercy!" her grasp was relaxed, and she fell as one dead at his feet.

Bewildered, stupefied, it was some time ere Charles could retire to a corner of the cell with the generous warrior; and then he understood, at the time, but half his discourse.

"Our gracious Queen Costanza," said the knight, "has laboured to prevent farther blood, and to spare thee! though the daughter of Manfred, the near relative of Corradino, she would not execute a sanguinary revenge. She could not openly oppose the popular spirit, or the sentence of the Sindachi, but, with the Infant Don Giacomo, she has at last succeeded in convincing them that it would not be proper to execute that sentence and dispose of thee without knowing her husband's will; and has induced them to consent to

thy removal to Arragon, where King Pietro still abideth. He is a noble Prince; once out of Sicily, where men's minds are yet furious against thee and thine, thy life will be safe. I myself have undertaken to see thee safely embarked, and in the middle of this very night, whilst Messina is buried in sleep, with a good escort, I will conduct thee to the galleys, Prince, and augur thee a good voyage and better fortunes for the future!"

"And is it true?" faintly exclaimed Fidelia, a short time after the noble warrior had left the cell, as she revived in the arms and looked in the altered, happy countenance of the Prince; "and is it true, and art thou not to die, or have I dreamed—do I still dream?"

"My sweetest, my dearest, my foes have spared this life, one of whose attributes shall be unceasing gratitude, increased affection to thee! By the Heaven that hath vouchsafed me its mercy, I will so honour and cherish my little page that princesses shall envy her." And then the Prince imparted to her wondering, half-confused ear the interposition of the merciful Queen Costanza, and his coming voyage to Arragon.

Fidelia was so worn by tumultuous feeling, that she for a long while had no distinct sentiment save thankfulness; but at last she said, "Well, then, to Arragon! I will follow thee thither as here!"

During the day, both the Prince and his companion were frequently bewildered by the sudden and un hoped-for change in their fortunes; and the latter, who had been so deeply heart-stricken, and so long without refreshment or sleep, frequently felt giddy and faint, and more than once swooned away; but when, in the depth of night the escort arrived to conduct her royal lover from his prison to the galleys, she summoned up all her energies, and determined not to quit his side; and to watch well lest some mad Sicilian should repeat the attempt that had been made on his dear life when she landed with him from Di Loria's fleet, she walked close to him in the midst of the well-armed guard from the cell of Mattagriffone.

As they were issuing in silence from the gates of the old fortress, Fidelia's quick eye caught the glance of a horrid countenance glaring over the shoulders of the guards at the person of Charles. Its deadly expression alarmed her—she drew closer to the Prince—but the procession hurried on, and that face was no more seen.

The Sicilian knight led them close under the walls of the town, whose deep shadows concealed them : whilst from the stilly way in which they hurried along, and the wordless silence they continued to preserve, not even the guards on those walls were made sensible of their passage, and the removal of the Prince from Sicilian vengeance. At several points of their mysterious march, Fidelia could hear the foot-falls of the Messinese sentinels on the ramparts ; and these sounds, or the barking of a dog within the town, and every other, though the slightest noise, made her tremble with fear for Charles. But at length all apprehensions were over. The party reached the sea-shore, at an unfrequented spot behind the port : a strong company of Di Loria's mariners were there with a barge to receive the captive Prince ; and a brave galley floated on the waves, not more than the distance of half an arrow's flight from the shore. But even at that instant of time, when hope and joy revived in her bosom—when she felt at last the Prince was safe—that his last footsteps were on the fatal soil of Sicily, the horrid countenance she had seen under the deep gate of Mattagriffone glared again on her eyes ; the escort, concluding all peril to the Prince now over, did not stand round him closely as they had done ; and as she tried in vain to utter a warning scream, she saw that savage man rush on her lover with a long dagger in his hand, and the exclamation on his tongue of " This for Suabia !" But the movement of the heroic girl was as prompt as the assassin's ; and throwing herself under his descending dagger, she received it in her bosom, letting her lover escape unharmed. She fell dead at Charles's feet, and before the murderer could repeat his blow, the Sicilian knight extended him, lifeless as herself, by the side of his lovely victim.



The horror-struck Prince was carried on board the boat that presently reached the ready galley ; but as the sails were spread to a favouring wind, and he careered over the waves, he looked back on the melancholy shore, and (could he do less ?) wept with the bitterest tears the loss of so much beauty, talent, and devotedness.

Nearly five years after his defeat and captivity by Di Loria, Charles was liberated and restored to his kingdom of Naples, where many a scene must have recalled the memory of his Page, and where, in power and prosperity, he never again found a Fidelia.



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### *fourteenth Century.*

1300.—THE factions of the Bianchi and Neri continuing to devastate Florence, the Donati, and some other leading families of the party of the Neri, were thrown into prison by the advice of the poet, Dante Alighieri.

1301.—Charles of Valois assumed authority in Florence, where he was sustained by the Pope and the Guelfs. The Neri now recovered liberty and power; and the following year Dante, who had advised their incarceration, was thrown into prison by them, while his property was confiscated and his house razed to the ground. His imprisonment was soon followed by that exile from which he never returned (no, not even his bones!) to “ungrateful Florence.” The same fate befel hundreds of others—hundreds of the noble and the opulent of the turbulent Republic.

1302.—Frederic of Arragon, who with his Sicilians effectually opposed Charles of Valois and the formidable army he had led into the island from Naples, concluded a peace with the French prince and the Pope, the principal conditions of which were that he was to continue to hold his insular crown under the title of King of Trinacria (one of the ancient names of Sicily), as a fief of the Holy See, and that on his death it was to revert to the house of Anjou, from whom it had been wrenched by the Sicilian Vespers. This same year, one of the Colonna family, with a number of adherents, seized the treasures and the person of the Pope Bonifazio, to whom they could never pardon their former humiliation, in the Palace of Anagni. The Pope was rescued, but only to pass into the hands of the Orsini, another powerful Roman family, the rivals of the Colonna, among whom he was still as a prisoner. This outrage and insult threw him into a paroxysm of rage and insanity, in which he died.

1304.—Benedict XI., the successor of the irascible Bonifazio, attempting to free himself from the thralldom in which the cardinals and Roman nobles now retained the Pontiffs, was carried off by poison.

This year is memorable in the annals of Italy for the birth of Francesco Petrarca, who was born (as Dante died) in exile.

1305.—The Popedom was translated from Rome to Lyons, and finally to Avignon—an important event, described by the historians of the country as

having produced the ruin of Italy, and a wound for ever memorable in the see of Saint Peter. There were now as many signors, or little despots, in Upper Italy, as there had formerly been free republics. Bologna and Padua alone continued free, but the latter finally fell under the tyranny of the Carrara. In Piedmont the Counts of Savoy and the Marquisses of Montferrat had ruled as absolute sovereigns; and though, by a popular revulsion, a Bonifaze of Savoy and a William of Montferrat had been enclosed in iron cages and ended their days in captivity, an organized republican liberty had never been restored. In Milan, once the centre of Lombard freedom, the tyranny of the Visconti had been succeeded by the despotism of the Della Torre family, and now, "under the flimsy veil of popular suffrage," the Milanese, whose ancestors would not bend to an Emperor and a Frederic Barbarossa, obeyed the will of Guido della Torre. In 1310 the Emperor, Henry VII., reduced the Lombard cities, but died soon after.

1310.—King Robert, who had somewhat irregularly succeeded to the throne of Naples, now aimed at the universal sovereignty of Italy; and the old wars were renewed between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines in Lombardy and in Tuscany.

1316.—Castruccio Castracani, one of the most extraordinary of Italian characters in the middle ages, formed a principality for himself in Lucca, and placed himself at the head of the Ghibellines.

1325.—Castracani defeated the Florentines near the Castle of Altopascio, and took their Carroccio.

1327.—Louis of Bavaria, who had beaten his rival Frederic of Austria, and secured the Imperial crown, crossed the Alps to prosecute the plans of Henry VII. On his arrival in Lombardy, he had only a few troops of German horse; but he was presently joined by the Ghibelline princes, who crowned him with the iron crown of Lombardy. Meanwhile the Pope excommunicated him, and the Guelfs rose up in arms.

1328.—Castruccio Castracani died; and his death, added to troubles that had again broken out in Germany, obliged the Emperor to recross the Alps, and leave Italy to herself.

1328.—The Duke of Calabria, the son of King Robert, and father of the unfortunate Joanna I. of Naples, also died this year.

1337.—Guelf and Ghibelline warfare again raged in Italy. Mastino della Scala, Lord of Verona, had by treachery and arms absorbed the whole of the Trevisan march, and possessed himself of a vast and rich country, which by pressing on the republic of Florence on one side, and on that of Venice on the other, excited the jealousies of these susceptible governments, and led to a league between them that terminated in Mastino's defeat and humiliation.

Frederic, the King of Sicily, died, and was succeeded by his son Peter II. in spite of the treaty of 1303, which stipulated that at his death the crown should revert to the Angevins of Naples. King Robert, the reigning sovereign of

Naples, asserted his rights at the death of Frederic, and again (five years after) on the death of Peter II. and by arms ; but neither his extensive means and superior talents, favoured by the divisions of the Sicilian nobles, the imbecility of Peter, and the minority of his successor Louis, nor years of warfare, could enable Robert to triumph over the independent spirit of the islanders, who would not have a French prince to rule over them, and at last peacefully retained the descendants of Frederic.

1342.—The Republic of Florence underwent the most disgraceful of her revolutions. Walter de Brienne, a French adventurer, and titular Duke of Athens, having distinguished himself by some valorous deeds in their service, and supposed to have favour and influence at the court of Robert of Naples, whose succour they required in a pending war, was invested by the Florentines, not only with the supreme military command, but with the civil authority of captain of justice. By flattering the democracy and cajoling part of the nobles, who hated the reigning party, he soon established himself as a despot. In a general parliament of the sovereign people, it was resolved by the clamorous voice of the multitude to bestow on the Duke of Athens the signiory of Florence for life ; and though the more virtuous citizens, as well as the oligarchy, regarded the measure with horror, the idol of the hour was installed by the armed nobles and the riotous populace in the Palace of the Priors. The standard of the Republic was dragged through the mud, and publicly burnt with the book of the ordinances of justice ; the arms of the state were thrown down from the public buildings to be replaced by those of the new signior, and Walter de Brienne remained Lord of Florence.

But, fortunately for Florence, the Frenchman's talents were very confined, and his tyranny expired of its own excesses in less than a year. After several conspiracies, there was a general rise against him ; his foreign soldiery were slaughtered, the narrow streets made impervious to his gens-d'armes by barricades, and he was finally taken prisoner in the Palace of the State. The Bishop of Florence, one of the heads of the justifiable conspiracy, saved Walter de Brienne's life ; but he was compelled to abdicate the signiory—to quit the city for ever, and his obnoxious ministers were torn to pieces by the merciless populace.\*

1343.—On the 13th of January died "Robert King of Naples, and Lord of Provence, and of other States in Piedmonte : a prince no less celebrated for his piety than for his literature, for his justice, wisdom, and many other virtues. It is written by Giovanni Villani, that in his old age the King contracted the vice of avarice, from which he left his grand-daughter the heiress of great wealth."—Muratori Annali.

This grand-daughter, the beautiful Joanna, was only sixteen years of age

\* The perfidious tyrant of Florence, after his expulsion, underwent a series of adventures, was created constable of France, and found a death more honourable than his life on the field of Poitiers.—See Perceval's Hist. Ital.

when she succeeded ; her Hungarian husband, Andrea, or as he was commonly called in contempt by the Italians, Andreasso, was only a few months older. The Queen's misfortunes began with her reign.

1345.—The young King Andrea was strangled at Aversa, a small town near Naples.

1347.—Louis, King of Hungary, and elder brother to the deceased Andrea, hurried to Italy to avenge his death, which he attributed to the young Queen his wife. According to Giovanni Villani, the Hungarian King, and his barons who went with him, all wore black over their armour ; and to animate the Hungarian soldiers, a black banner was always carried before them, on which was painted the figure of the unfortunate Andrea, hung by the neck, "which was a horrid thing to see !"\* The Hungarians found Naples, as usual, an easy conquest. The young Queen, who had married Louis of Taranto, fled to Provence, where she fully exculpated herself of the horrid crime attributed to her before the Pope at Avignon.

1351.—Louis had returned to Hungary the year after he conquered Naples, and took sanguinary vengeance for his brother's murder. Joanna had reappeared in her own states, and succeeded in wresting a great part of the kingdom from the Hungarians. The troops employed by both parties were chiefly Condottieri, or foreign mercenaries, who committed shocking atrocities. This year Louis, who was returning to Naples, listened to terms of accommodation. Joanna's cause was again submitted to the Pope at Avignon, who again declared her innocent, and finally induced Louis to retire from the kingdom.

On the retreat of the Holy See from Rome, that degraded city fell into a frightful anarchy. The nobles, among whom the Colonna and the Orsini were the most conspicuous, carried on incessant wars with each other.

1354.—Cola di Rienzi, the son of an innkeeper and washerwoman of Rome—the tribune, and the object of Petrarca's enthusiastic admiration—had for a second time established a republican form of government among the Romans, and curbed the violent nobles ; but his second administration was unpopular, and lasted but for a few months ; and on the 8th of September of this year he terminated an extraordinary life by a pusillanimous death.

To the woes of internal warfare Italy had now added the horrors of famine and pestilence. An appalling scarcity had manifested itself after the harvest of 1346 ; and two years later the plague was introduced from the Levant by some Genoese vessels. The impressive description of this tremendous scourge at Florence, with which Boccaccio opens his *Decameron*, may enable us to judge of the sufferings of the rest of Italy.

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\* Lib. xii. cap. lviii. Script. Rer. Ital. vol. xiii. The reader will remember the standards on which the murders were depicted to animate the populace of Edinburgh after the dreadful catastrophe of the Kirk of Field. But indeed, as it has been often remarked, the histories of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, and of the no less beautiful Joanna of Naples, tally in almost every point.

1355.—An obstinate war between Genoa and Venice, arising from some disputes relative to the commerce of the Black Sea, was closed this year, after the entire destruction of the Venetian fleet in the port of Sapienza, in the Morea. The same year witnessed the well-known tragedy of Marin Faliero, the Doge of Venice; and the progress in Lombardy and Tuscany of another emperor (Charles IV.), who had crossed the Alps the preceding year, invited by many of the Italian states. His progress, however, was soon stopped, and (to give the so often repeated story of the emperors) he recrossed the Alps, followed by the general contempt and detestation of the Italians.

1358.—The year after the decapitation of Marin Faliero, the Venetians were involved in a dangerous and unfortunate war with the King of Hungary, who would not make peace until they renounced the sovereignty of Dalmatia.

1359.—The Visconti, the tyrants of Milan, rendered themselves masters of Pavia.

1362.—A war between Florence and Pisa, terminated in the ruin of the commerce and prosperity of the latter republic, which, having once aspired to the dominion of the Mediterranean, was humbled by the energetic Florentines, who had not an inch of maritime territory, and had prosecuted hostilities by hiring armed galleys in Provence, at Genoa and Naples.

It was during this war between Pisa and Florence, that Sir John Hawkwood and his English followers, who became by far the most distinguished of the condottieri, or foreign mercenaries, made their first appearance in Italy.

1364.—A war was finished between the Visconti and the Church, when the latter consummated the subjection of the whole of Romagna, and restored for a while peace to Lombardy.

1367.—The seat of the popedom was restored to Rome by Urban V., a circumstance which Petrarca had long and earnestly prayed for.

1368.—A league had been formed with the object of humbling the Visconti, between the Pope, the Emperor, the King of Hungary, and the Signiors of Padua, Ferrara, and Mantua; in consequence of which, Charles IV. (the Emperor) again crossed the Alps. Sir John Hawkwood, now in the service of Milan, arrested the progress of the Imperialists by cutting the dikes of the Adige, and Bernabo Visconti bought off the Emperor, who negotiated a peace with the infamous tyrant and sent back the greater part of his army into Germany. The Emperor went into Tuscany, where he repeated the rapacity, meanness, and treachery of his former Italian visit. At Sienna, however, the people rose against him, killed or grievously wounded a thousand of his three thousand gens-d'armes, and compelled him to a disgraceful surrender at discretion. He sold to Lucca the restoration of her ancient liberties, and the following year recrossed the Alps, having given the finishing blow to the dignity of the Imperial authority in Italy.

1370.—The Pope, Urban, formed another league against the powerful Visconti, but finding that it was unsuccessful, and that the tranquillity of Avignon was

preferable to the troubles of Italy, he again transferred the Roman See to Provence. Two circumstances that accompanied this war are worth remembering :—When Bernabo Visconti received the Pope's declaration of hostilities in the shape of a Bull of excommunication, he made the two legates who brought it eat or swallow the Bull,—parchment, leaden seals, silken strings and all; and Sir John Hawkwood, still in his service, inflicted a signal defeat upon the Florentine army at Cascina in Tuscany, and nearly succeeded in carrying Pisa by surprise.

1374.—The Visconti having imprudently discharged Sir John Hawkwood and his English, or “White Company of Adventure,” that extraordinary man passed into the service of the Church, and carried fortune with him.

1375.—The Pope's Legate, hoping to reduce the Republic, enfeebled by pestilence, death, and faction, to the Papal yoke, suddenly made war on Florence. In this service Sir John Hawkwood burned the harvests of the Florentines to increase the dearth, and committed other atrocious acts. Thus roused, the people of Florence leagued themselves with the Visconti, with Sienna, Lucca, Arezzo, and Pisa, and stirred up the Romagna to revolt against the Church. The banner of the Florentine Republic, with the simple and emphatic motto of “LIBERTY,” found friends everywhere in spite of a barbarous massacre at Forli, perpetrated by the furious English condottiero, in the idea of deterring the revolvers.

The Pope (now Gregory XI.) sent a ferocious army of Bretons into Italy, where they committed (in Romagna) the most frightful excesses, massacring at Cesena alone, and under the encouraging eye of a cardinal legate, five thousand souls, men, women, and children. Fortunately for the Florentines, they gained over Sir John Hawkwood to their service, and then prosecuted the war with activity and success.

1378.—Gregory XI. had arrived at Rome from Avignon the preceding year. Bologna had detached itself from the hostile league under favourable conditions; but while the Tuscan republics, with Florence at their head, were treating for peace with the Pope, he died this year, and left the chair of St. Peter's to be the subject of unseemly contest.

The Romans insisting that the Popedom should no longer be given to foreigners, who would feel inclined to transfer it from Italy, but to a Roman, or at least to an Italian, Urban VI., a Neapolitan, was elected by a somewhat irregular conclave. Shortly after, the cardinals at Fondi annulled the election, and adjudged the tiara to the Cardinal of Geneva, who assumed the title of Clement VII. Hence arose the Great Schism of the West, which troubled and disgraced not only Italy, but nearly all Europe. This same year Florence was the scene of the insurrection of a democratical faction, that humbled the Guelf aristocracy, but nearly ruined the city and Republic. The ruin was averted only by the patriotism of Michele di Lando, one of the mob. Florence however, for three years, was tyrannized by cruel demagogues, at the head of whom were Tomaso Strozzi and Giorgio Scali.

1378.—The Genoese, who attributed wars in which they were engaged in Tenedos, in Cyprus, and Liguria, to the jealousy of their rivals the Venetians, formed a powerful league against Venice.

1379.—The Venetian fleet was totally defeated by the Genoese, after which Peter Doria entered the lagunes of Venice, and uttered the well-known threat to put a rein upon the unbridled horses of St. Mark. But in her last extremity Venice was saved by skill and courage,—the Genoese were blocked up at Chiozza, and finally obliged to surrender to the Doge Contarini.

1381.—Venice, after a noble struggle, made peace with the League, losing, however, her recent acquisitions on the Italian continent.

1382.—Joanna Queen of Naples, for the fourth time a wife, with no surviving children to succeed her, had several times varied in the adoption of the prince to be her successor; but this year Charles of Durazzo seized the kingdom of Naples by force of arms, and had the unfortunate Queen strangled in prison with a silken cord, “Even,” say the chroniclers, “as her husband Andrea had been strangled at Aversa thirty-seven years before.

1385.—Bernabo Visconti was deposed, poisoned, and succeeded by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, as perfidious a villain as himself.

1394.—The English condottiero, Sir John Hawkwood, decidedly the best general of the age in Italy, died of sickness at an estate he had purchased near Florence. The Republic buried him with great honours in the cathedral, where his tomb is still seen surmounted by an equestrian statue.

1395.—Gian Galeazzo, from a sense of his own weakness, induced the Emperor, by the payment of 100,000 florins, to erect Milan into an Imperial duchy, and to bestow on him the investiture of it as a fief. The following year the proud Genoa, worn out by revolutions, surrendered herself to the protection of Charles VI. of France.

1399.—After long civil wars between the parties of Anjou and Durazzo, Ladislaus, the son of Charles III., was finally established on the throne of the Two Sicilies.







## The King's Nurse.

— Perciocchè amava il suo Signore siccome madre.

LIBRO DEL POLISTORE.

I have given suck ; and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE virtues of King Robert of Naples, of the line of the Angevins, might serve to cancel the memory of the crimes by which the sanguinary Charles I., his grandfather, had obtained possession of that splendid crown, and transmitted it to his

descendants. A love of humanity and justice, an improved legislation, an unceasing attention to all that could civilize and comfort, endeared him to his subjects ; and in his attachment to literature and its cultivators, whom he honoured and protected to the utmost of his ability, he had the fortunate glory of identifying himself with some of the undying effusions of Petrarca and Boccaccio, who, with many others of his literary cotemporaries, never tired of his praise, and of the commendations of his refined court, where

Fur le Muse nudrite a un tempo istesso,  
Ed anco esercitate.

His only son, Charles, the Duke of Calabria, who had already exercised the difficult task of governing, gave every promise of prolonging the virtues of his sire and the golden age of Naples ; but in the year 1328, and on the eve of Saint Martin's, he died prematurely at the capital, to the inexpressible grief of his unhappy father, and of all the kingdom ; and with infinite tears he was buried in the church of Santa Chiara, the King lamenting, as he followed him to the tomb, " Alas ! the crown is fallen from our head ! " \*

To aggravate this unexpected calamity, the virtuous Prince Charles left no son to succeed him—his surviving issue being two infant daughters, Joanna and Maria, to whom his widow soon added a posthumous daughter, also named Maria.

The tender-hearted and enlightened monarch, as soon as the first violence of his grief had subsided, devoted every attention to the health and education of the young Joanna, who was now to take his place on the throne of the countries he had rendered so happy ; and as he felt the infirmities of age approaching, he contracted an alliance for her with the second son of his nephew the King of Hungary, who, by his descent from Charles Martel, Robert's elder brother, might have advanced pretensions to the kingdom of the Two Sicillies, and troubled his grand-daughter Joanna's reign. His Majesty of Hungary, Caribert, brought him-

self the young spouse to Naples, where, in 1333, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp between the Hungarian Prince Andrea, and the Neapolitan Princess Joanna, neither of whom was more than seven years of age ! The King of Hungary, happy at having left a son so well provided for, with the certainty of succeeding to so opulent a kingdom, departed and returned to Hungary, leaving many of his Hungarians in the service of his son, who was already entitled Duke of Calabria, and, among others, he left in great authority an Hungarian monk, called Fra Roberto, or Friar Robert, who was charged to instruct the little Andrea in letters and politeness.\*

But this premature marriage, which King Robert had resorted to with infinite prudence and forethought, as being the most likely means to secure the happiness and tranquillity of his grand-daughter and his subjects, became the source of a terrific tragedy, of long-enduring miseries to both ; † and Fra Roberto, whom Caribert had left to form the mind of the young Andrea, to guide and protect him, became the instrument of that prince's ruin and early death.

Even during his lifetime, King Robert is reported by some of the Italian historians to have regretted the marriage, seeing that Andrea, though brought up in his civilized court, "academy, and domicile of every virtue and accomplishment," did not abandon the barbarous customs of the Hungarians, nor seek the society of the more refined Italians and courtiers, but associated solely with the Hungarians his father had left, and with others of the same uncultivated nation, who came from time to time to seek their fortunes at Naples. His regret may have been increased by the compassion he felt for his beautiful young grand-daughter, who, accomplished and full of wit, would have to pass her days with one so uncivilized in his tastes—stupid and indolent. The characters

\* *Storia Civile del Regno di Napoli*. "Che avesse da essere Maestro di lettere, e di creanza," are the quaint words of Giannone.

† "Auspiciously contrived as this union might seem to silence a subsisting claim upon the kingdom, it proved eventually the source of civil war and calamity for a hundred and fifty years."—Hallam's *Middle Ages*, ch. iii. part 2.

of the young husband and young wife, as indeed nearly every point of their strange history, have been differently represented, and made the subject of doubt and discussion, but that something like the feelings attributed to him here, existed in the mind of King Robert, strengthened apparently by his apprehensions of the Hungarians arrogating to themselves an undue part in the government of the kingdom when he should be no more, seems proved by the fact, admitted on all sides, that on the approach of death he summoned a general parliament of all the barons of the kingdom, and the sindaci of the royal cities, and took their oath of allegiance to Joanna *alone* as Queen, stipulating that they should establish a council, dependent entirely on her, whilst her husband Andrea should only obtain the title of Queen's consort.

But scarcely had the tomb closed over the wise and lamented sovereign, than all his prudent regulations were set at nought by a powerful faction; and his subjects, in the words of the old historian, Angelo Costanzo, comparing his admirable government to the misrule which followed, felt the difference there is between day and night. The Hungarians, headed by the astute Friar Robert, who, under a monk's hood, and outward humility, and squalidness, hid an ambition which could not content itself save with the power that belongs to a crown, possessed themselves by degrees of the government of the kingdom, expelling, one by one, all the faithful and prudent ministers of the late King Robert, and administering everything after their own will and caprice, leaving to Joanna, who was only sixteen years of age, and in fact the prisoner of these uncultivated men, the name of a queen indeed, but nothing more. The high-minded Princess was, moreover, afflicted by seeing the thoughtlessness or imbecility of her husband, who was not less than herself subjected to the Hungarians. Expelled from power, and even from the court, the faithful and attached ministers of her grandfather could neither counsel her inexperience nor console her in her sufferings; and the flower of the Neapolitan knights, that had given such lustre to the royal halls during the preceding reign, despairing of the unwarlike, slothful Andrea, and disgusted with his Hungarians, withdrew from the kingdom to join

Robert Prince of Taranto, who cherished the project of conquering Greece, and Thrace, and Constantinople.

It was at this unhappy conjuncture that the all-accomplished Petrarca arrived at Naples on a high mission from the Pope at Avignon ; and in his letters, through the exaggeration of oratory, to which he was somewhat too much addicted in his correspondence, we may trace an odious and true picture. The poet had frequented and honoured with his most glowing eulogiums the refined court of King Robert, who appointed him his domestic chaplain and almoner ; an office never allotted but to persons of the highest distinction, and to which sundry important privileges were attached. With the past fresh in his recollection, he contrasts the present, and mourns over the fate of the young Queen, —over the condition of Naples generally, now oppressed by a monk, whom he thus describes :—

“A horrible animal, with bald head and bare feet, short in stature, swollen in person, with worn-out rags, torn studiously to show his naked skin ; who not only despises the supplications of the citizens of Naples, but, from the vantage ground of his feigned sanctity, treats with scorn the embassy of the Pope. Yet this is not marvellous, because his pride is founded on the treasures he accumulates ; for, from what is reported, it appears that his caskets full of gold do not accord with the rags he wears. \* \* \* Is he a fit successor to such a monarch as the wise and good King Robert, who, more depraved than Dionysius, Phalaris, and Agathocles, has remained to govern the Court of Naples, but with a new and marvellous species of tyranny ? He wears nor crown, nor brocade, nor silk ; but with a squalid mantle, filthy and torn, which covers but half his swollen body, and with a crouching gait, bent not by age but hypocrisy, he rules with unutterable arrogance and tyranny the court of the Queen ; oppresses the weak, treads justice under foot, confounds all things human and divine ; and, like a new Palinurus or Tiphys, sits at the helm of this great vessel, which, from what I can discern, will quickly go the bottom.”

While the sensitive lover of Laura was thus lamenting at Naples the changes which had taken place, sympathizing in vain with the

lovely young Queen, and foretelling a moral tempest, he was witness to a physical one of the most tremendous nature. As it would be impertinent to attempt what he has described, and as his description has all the interest an eye-witness can give, his words are again quoted from a letter he addressed the day after the event to his friend the Cardinal Colonna.\*

"This visitation from Heaven was foretold, several days before its occurrence, by the bishop of a little neighbouring island, who rested his prediction on certain astronomical calculations : but, as it rarely happens that prophets penetrate the whole truth of any future event ; so he unluckily announced, as the completion of the catastrophe, 'that a terrible earthquake would ensue, by which Naples itself would be destroyed on the 25th of November.'

"This advertisement obtained so much credit, that the greater part of the inhabitants actually gave up every other consideration to the grand concerns of religion ; imploring the mercy of God, and his forgiveness of their past offences, as if the following day were infallibly to be their last.

"On the other hand, many laughed at the idle prediction, observing how little faith was due to astrologers ; the more especially as only a few days had passed since the last earthquake. In the midst of these apprehensions and encouragements (of which the former, however, predominated), I retired on the evening of the 24th, just before sunset, to my apartment, and in my way thither met almost all the females of the city (in whom the sense of shame had been swallowed up by that of danger) barefooted, and with hair dishevelled, crowding to the churches, with their babes in their arms, crying and imploring God for mercy. As night came on, the sky was more than usually serene. My servants went to bed immediately after supper. For my own part, I proposed to stay up and watch the setting of the moon, at that time (I think) in her first quarter. The window which looks to the west was left open, and I saw her, as about midnight she hid her-

\* I have availed myself of the translation used by the late Ugo Foscolo in his admirable essay on Petrarca.

self behind St. Martin's Mount, her face much darkened, and partially covered by clouds. I then closed the window, and stretched myself on my bed, where, after lying for some time awake, I was fast falling asleep, when I was roused by the noise of an earthquake. The casement was burst open, the light which I always keep burning in my chamber was extinguished, and the whole house shook to its very foundations.

"In this state, between sleeping and waking, and assailed by the terror of impending destruction, I ran to the cloisters of the monastery in which I reside, and where we groped about in the dark (having only the glimmering of one dull lamp to direct us), to receive and administer whatever consolation was in our power. Here we were shortly met by the abbot—a very pious man—with his monks in procession, who, terrified by the tempest, were bearing the holy cross and reliques of saints, and preceded by lighted torches, with devout prayers and exclamations, in their way to the church to sing matins to the Virgin. This having inspired me with courage, I accompanied them to the church, where we all, with one accord, threw ourselves prostrate on the ground, and did nothing else but with loud uplifted voices implore the divine mercy and forgiveness ; expecting every minute the sacred building to fall and bury us in the ruins.

"It would be much too long to recount all the horrors of that infernal night ; and although the truth very far exceeds all power of description, yet I fear to be thought guilty of exaggeration when I exclaim, What deluges of water ! what wind ! what thunder ! what terrible rumbling in the heavens ! what fearful tremblings of the earth ! what vehement commotion in the sea ! what shrieks of amazed and distracted multitudes ! The long night seemed extended by magic art to twice its actual duration ; and when morning came, its approach was announced to us rather by the clock than by any corresponding light in the firmament. The priests robed themselves for the celebration of mass ; while we, not having courage to lift our faces to heaven, remained stretched on the ground in prayer and supplication. Though day had broke, it was still as dark as night. The multitudes in the upper part of

the city had begun to disperse ; but towards the sea-shore the noise seemed to increase, and the clattering of horses was heard in the street below. What this could mean it was impossible to ascertain ; but made bold by despair, I at last mounted on horseback myself, resolved to see, even though I should perish.

“Great God ! who ever heard of such things as I then beheld ? The oldest seamen declared that the like was never witnessed. In the midst of the port were seen an infinite number of poor wretches scattered about on the sea, and struggling to gain the shore, who, by the violence and fury of the waves, were battered about till they looked like so many eggs dashed to pieces on the beach. The whole space was filled with drowned and half-drowned bodies ; some with their skulls fractured, others with broken arms or legs, others with their bowels gushing out ; and the screams of men and women who lived near the beach were no less terrific than the uproar of the elements. The very sands, on which the day before you walked in ease and safety, were become more dangerous than the Faro of Messina, or the whirlpool of Charybdis. A thousand or more of the Neapolitan nobility came to the shore on horseback, as if to solemnize the funeral obsequies of their country ; and when I found myself among them, I began to be of better cheer, seeing that if I were doomed to perish, I should die with the honour of knighthood. Soon the dreadful rumour came to our ears, that the ground on which we trod had been undermined by the sea, and was beginning to open. We fled precipitately and saved ourselves ; but the spectacle we then beheld was the most terrible ever witnessed by mortal eye : the heavens so commingled ! the sea so implacably turbulent ! the waves mountain high, and in colour neither black nor blue, as in more ordinary tempests, but perfectly white, like hills of snow, rolling over the whole expanse from Capri to Naples.

“The young Queen, barefooted, and attended by a numerous train of females, went to visit the churches dedicated to the blessed Virgin. No vessel in the harbour was capable of resisting the violence of the gale ; and three galleys which had arrived from Cyprus, and were to depart that morning, were seen by



sympathizing thousands to go down without a soul being saved. Three other large ships, which had anchored in the port, struck against each other and sank, and all on board perished. Of all the vessels, one only escaped, on board of which were no less than four hundred galley-slaves, who had been engaged in the Sicilian war; by the strength of these malefactors alone, the ship was enabled to stem the fury of the overwhelming element; and even they were quite exhausted, when, at the approach of night, beyond all hope, and contrary to the universal expectation, the sky cleared, the wind abated, and the sea grew calm. Thus the most infamous of the sufferers are those alone who escaped a watery grave. Alas! that the words of Lucan should have thus proved true!—‘that fortune favours the wicked;’—or that such is the pleasure of God; or that they, who in the hour of trial are most indifferent whether they live or die, are the securest from danger! This is the history of yesterday.”—Nov. 27, 1343.

This tremendous tempest produced the following circumstances. The court of Queen Joanna and Andrea were at Naples the night when the storm commenced, and safe within the strong and high walls of the Castel-nuovo; but many of the domestics, or persons who held inferior offices about the royal personages, were lodged in detached apartments below the castle, and close to the shores of the bay, where, on the sudden rise of the sea, which had not been anticipated from the predictions of an earthquake, they were exposed to the greatest peril. Among these latter was the foster-sister of the King, Isoldina, an Hungarian maiden, the daughter of Isolda, Andrea's nurse, who had come with him from his native country and never left him. Buried in the sound deep sleep of youth and innocence, the fair Hungarian was not aroused by the lashing of the waves, which made the lowlier tenements rock from their foundations; even when the rest of the lodgers all ran shrieking from the inundated spot, she still slept on; nor was it until part of the buildings had been washed away, and her fond mother, who had hurried to the place of danger, had shrieked for some time the name of Isoldina, that she appeared at one of the windows, and became sensible of her perilous situation.

By this time she was completely isolated in the midst of a foaming, frothing sea, that threatened every moment to swallow up the tottering house. She screamed for aid ; but the horror of the scene was such, and such the general panic, that all had fled into the castle, or up the heights that ascend from the shores of the bay ; and none heeded her save her mother, who stood on the edge of a wall, which also trembled under the rapid and violent percussion of the invading sea. With her arms wildly stretched towards her daughter, whom she could not save—for whom she could do nothing—the King's nurse shrieked most loudly, but her voice was swallowed up by the roaring winds and waves, and the groans of the labouring walls, or the dash and crack of the fallen fragments that were hurled hither and thither with astounding confusion.

At this moment of exquisite maternal agony, when she expected each coming wave would sweep away her daughter, who was still at the window with clasped hands, and eyes upturned to heaven,—and when neither mother nor child saw any hope of succour on earth, a young man—a squire of the Count Giacomo Capanno, the grand marshal of the kingdom—rushed to the dreadful spot. This youth, who had seen and admired the fair Hungarian about the palace, and who had continued his admiration, though her mother from strong national prejudices, and dislike and distrust of the Italians, among whom her curious fortune had sent her to reside, had opposed his addresses—on hearing of the disastrous situation of Isoldina from one of her fugitive fellow-lodgers, had come with love's heroism and devotion to save or to sacrifice himself. He had induced a porter of the palace to accompany him to the scene of danger, and had prudently provided himself with a coil of rope, and a strong staff. As the almost frantic mother saw his preparations and determination, she exclaimed, "Oh, Gaetano! save but my Isoldina—my child, and she is thine!"

Such an assurance might well increase the boldness, of which to its utmost stretch he stood in need, for the sea roared and foamed like the gulf beneath a cataract, and masses of building

and timber were thrown about with terrific violence in the space that intervened between him and the maiden, and seemed to threaten certain destruction to any body who should venture among them, even if he could escape being broken to pieces against the walls by the dashing waves. But with a passionate glance to the young object of his love, whose pale face and bosom and long naked arms he could see through the blackness of the storm and night, and with a brief prayer to the Madonna for aid and strength, having attached the cord round his waist, and given its other extremity to the hands of the matron and the porter, and grasping his staff, he descended from the wall into the dread turmoil of the waters. Scarcely had the bold youth advanced a sabre's length from the foot of the wall, when a coming wave threw him back and bruised him violently against the hard stones and brick ; and three other attempts he made were equally unsuccessful, but did not daunt his spirit. When about to be crushed by a heavy beam that was tossed on the angry element, as though it had been a straw, he contrived to evade the percussion, and to attach himself to the timber ; a reflux followed, and he was carried with the beam to the half-submerged tenement, whence in the next minute he was seen supporting the terrified Isoldina. Having again grasped the piece of timber, he took advantage of another wave that came on in mountainous height, and, using all his strength to retain his hold of that mass and of the maiden, he was washed against the wall, where the mother and the porter, by drawing in the rope, could now render some assistance. As Isoldina grasped the cord, Gaetano, with his staff, kept off, as best he could, the fragments that were dashing about ; and though he himself received several severe bruises from them, he had the satisfaction of seeing the fair Hungarian reach the top of the wall without having sustained any serious injury. He was then drawn up himself, and the midnight party, after a rapture of joy, hastened to a place of safety, thanking Heaven for the miraculous preservation. As they hurried on, and ere they gained the inner enclosure of Castelnovo, a tremendous dash and rumble struck their ears, and on turning round they saw the wall on which they had been

standing, breaking to pieces ; of the house whence Isoldina had escaped no trace remained ; the hungry sea had swallowed it.

The gallant squire, of a certainty, deserved the bride he saved ; and if the mother felt this in spite of her inveterate dislike to the Italians, and remembered her promise made in the hour of need and despair, it may be imagined that Gaetano, who was not all indifferent to Isoldina before he became her preserver, should now receive the maiden's love with her gratitude. Still, however, there were circumstances that perverted their union ; and as with the lapse of time the recollection of the danger grew less vivid, the Hungarian mother's gratitude somewhat cooled, whilst her prejudices revived, and she constantly raised obstacles to her daughter's marriage, until she again stood in need of the brave Neapolitan's services, and that in a matter as near and as dear to her as her child's preservation.

The Hungarians, whom the Italians accused of brutality and ferocity, from the first moment of their coming among them, suspected the Italians of guile and dark treachery. This diffidence was general, but in no breast was it so strong as in that of the thoughtless Andrea's nurse, who loved the child she had suckled as much as if she had given him birth. Her suspicion being thus ever excited, induced a prying curiosity as to all that passed in the court and city of Naples, and a vigilance that never slept. For some time past, the nurse heard vague rumours of plots and general discontent, and her fears of the barons of the kingdom were now aggravated by the scowls she saw on their brows, their murmured intolerance of the monk Robert, that they could not always suppress, and by the whole state of affairs and feelings in the capital. She knew that something fatal, something that might compromise the liberty, or perhaps the life, of her imprudent young Prince was brooding ; and she knew also that the Grand Marshal Giacomo Capanno, in whose service, as squire, the enamoured Gaetano still continued, was one of the most disaffected of the Neapolitan nobles, and a man, from his fiery passions, most likely to carry matters to a sanguinary extremity. Something also had reached Isoldina's ever eager ear, of nocturnal meetings held by

that powerful baron, not only in his own castle in the Apennines, but at the city of Capua, and even at Naples; and though no word of what passed in those secret conclaves could ever be obtained, she was well aware that all those who were named to her as having attended them were most inimical to Andrea and the Hungarians.

The young Prince she had often warned, but with habitual indolence and thoughtlessness he disregarded what she said, or soon forgot it over his wine-cup, which he already drained with the devotion of a veteran toper; and she dreaded to impart her suspicions to friar Robert, lest his violence and cruelty should hasten and aggravate the catastrophe. But now she thought she could obtain the certain information of what she surmised, perhaps obviate the crisis, through the medium of the squire Gaetano. She therefore imparted to him her suspicions of his master, and his master's friends, and proposed, as a condition of his marriage with her daughter, that he should keep an eye on all the Grand Marshal's proceedings, and report them to her.

Absorbed with love, as was the brave youth, he could not however forget the principles inculcated in him in his education as squire, nor contemplate, without loathing, the character of a domestic spy—a traitor to his master; but when the nurse vowed that otherwise he never should wed Isoldina, that she would instantly conclude a marriage for her with an Hungarian about the court, he took a solemn oath to pry and to listen at the very first rendezvous the Grand Marshal should give his friends or adherents, and if he learned aught that regarded the life or safety of the young King—for he would not bind himself to report any other matter,—to warn the nurse immediately.

This opportunity soon occurred; for, a few days after he had bound himself to win his bride by farther services, as he was loitering with the fair Hungarian, he was summoned to attend the Grand Marshal, who was about to leave the palace for his mountain castle. He took a hasty and a fond farewell; the nurse saying as he went, "Remember, Gaetano! remember your oath!"

But the recollection of that solemn vow, and of the dubious

duties it implied, was never out of the squire's mind, and made him uneasy and uncomfortable in the presence of his master, who, a tyrant to others, had ever been kind to him, and whom he had hitherto served with loving faithfulness. As he rode after the Marshal, he mused, "By the mass! and it is only love could make me stoop for a moment to such dishonour! I the Baron's squire, to become the spy of his words and actions! Such a disgrace must never be heard in chivalry, or I shall never put a knight's spur to my boot!—and yet, if I do it not, Isoldina will never be mine! Oh, love! love!—but one thing however consoles me: the plot may only exist in the nurse's fertile brain, and I shall have no secrets to betray! Still, I must do a spy's functions; I must become an eavesdropper—a prying listener; and this is odious: Oh: Isoldina, too fair Hungarian! I would rather plunge again for thee into the raging waves, as when I saved thee from death:—I would ten times rather win thee by deadly combat with a rival, than thus!—But, cost it what it will, mine thou must be, and mine oath must be kept!"

The Castle of Count Giacomo Capanno, which was situated in the deep gorge of the mountains, through which runs the road from Naples to Salerno, did not long detain the Marshal and his squire. On the night of their arrival, the Count of Tralizzo, and some powerful barons from Apulia, joined Count Giacomo. They did not retire to secret consultation, nor let anything escape them that the attentive squire could take hold of, though he fancied their countenances were agitated, and their persons restless, like men on the eve of some important enterprise. This, however, might be but fancy, naturally enough proceeding in him from the nurse's suspicions, and he could glean nothing from the squires who accompanied the knights to confirm his apprehensions or remove them.

At an early hour on the following morning the Grand Marshal, with his guests and his squire Gaetano, set out from the castle. They pursued the road to Naples, and the squire had begun to think they were returning to the court, when, on approaching the end of the bay, he saw his master point to a little castle on an islet

but a few paces from the shore, and exclaiming, "Tralizzo, they are before us—we must not make them wait!" spur his horse and gallop in that direction, followed by the other nobles.

The miniature fortress lay nearly opposite to the interred city of Pompeii, at the roots of Mount Vesuvius, the emptied lava of which, indeed, formed the narrow islet on which it stood; the beautifully curving shores of the bay, the glassy sea, and the grand mountains which rose in the rear of the volcano, or nearer at hand behind Stabia and Castellamare, formed a lovely and tranquillizing picture, whose effect Gaetano could not help feeling, preoccupied as he was, when he embarked with his master and his guests in a boat which presently wafted them to the islet.\*

At the gate of the fortress there was an assemblage of nobles waiting their arrival with evident impatience. As he approached, the squire recognised the Count Carlo d'Artugio, a natural son of the late King Robert, Beltrame, the son of the said Count Carlo, the two lords of Lionessa, Tommaso and Masolo, sons of Messer Pace da Bologna, and Chamberlains to Andrea, Caffarello, the son of Messer Caraffa, Messer Raimondo da Napoli, the Count Marccone, accompanied by his wife, Dama Zanza, and some others.† He already knew that these individuals were among those the most decidedly inimical to the young King, the monk Robert, and the Hungarian faction; and though he could not yet conceive the extent and atrocity of their hatred, he felt it was not for a trifle they had all thus assembled in so silent and secret a place.

After the usual salutations, which they delivered hastily, as men who had weightier matters on their minds than formal courtesy, the nobles entered the castle, and retired at once to an apartment, the door of which they closed after them, leaving their squires, some of whom had stayed on the shore of the bay with the horses, to amuse themselves as they chose during their deliberations.

"Now is the moment to keep my oath and to win my bride!"

\* This little island and fortress still form beautiful features in the view from the ancient walls of Pompeii, or from Castellamare, on the opposite side of the bay.

† Il Libro di Polistore.

said Gaetano, as he slunk away from his fellows, who had chosen the very rational and absorbing amusement of eating and drinking, and gossiping with the old Chatelain of the fortress, and who seemed laudably indifferent to the mysteries of this meeting, or the secret their lords might have to impart to each other. The lover-spy reached a narrow gloomy corridor, into which opened the door of the chamber the barons occupied; and there he stayed and listened, without his absence being noticed by the squires, or any one else. The very first words that struck his ear were words of death, and it was his master who pronounced them.

"I tell ye," said the Grand Marshal, "that his death, and nothing but his death can save us! The monk Robert has penetrated our secret and our disaffection; and the drunken savage Andreasso,\* to show us the mercy we are to expect, has had painted a log and an axe † above his royal arms, and has even named over the wine-cup the first victims he will sacrifice!"

"Yes! I have heard I was among the number," said the Count of Tralizzo; "and you, Beltrame, and you, Count Carlo, and——"

"All—all are destined to the axe!" said the voice of the lady Zanza; "and if they should spare the life of her Majesty, my mistress, it is more than I could expect."

"Whatever we do must be done at once!" said another voice, "We have borne the insolence and oppression of these rude Hungarians too long already; and now the Pope's ambassadors are on the way with the Bull for Andreasso's coronation."

"The Queen will be crowned with him," rejoined another of the conspirators; "but the drunkard, or rather the dirty monk, pretends to reign alone; the fair Joanna will be a closer prisoner, and more their slave than ever."

"If they let my royal mistress live," interrupted the lady; "but again, I say, I fear she will be one of their first victims."

"We must be beforehand with them—we must save our bea11-

\* The very expressive, contemptuous diminutive by which the unfortunate Andrea was always called by the Italians.

† Dominici de Gravina, Chron. Rer. Apul.



tiful young Queen, by striking the blow at once," cried the Grand Marshal."

"But when the blow is struck," said another voice rather diffidently, "what will be our means of defence and justification?—there is an Hungarian party in the kingdom—we may fall before them, or be sacrificed to the first impulse of popular horror at such a murder!"

"Call not a deed of self-preservation by so foul a name!" retorted the Marshal angrily; "I tell you all, we must kill Andreasso, or he will kill us! There may be some to prefer the drunkard's life to their own, and the continuance of the degradation of these kingdoms, to a better order of things; but I am not one of their number: what say'st thou, Count Marcone?"

"We have no other alternative than his death!" said an assenting voice.

"And when it is over," said another speaker, whom the listening squire knew to be the Count Carlo d'Artugio, the late king's natural son, "we have friends to rally round us and assert the inalienable rights of Queen Joanna; there is more than one royal Prince—" Here his voice dropped, and the squire could only catch the names of Luigi di Taranto, her cousin, and of some other near relations of her Majesty.

"But how will the Queen herself feel towards those who have slain her husband?" inquired the same diffident voice that had spoken once before.

"Listen, Messer Masolo!" said Dama Zanza; "as a woman I may deliver an opinion on this head, and affirm that the grief of a beautiful and refined princess at the loss of a drunken, stupid husband like Andreasso is not likely to be very vehement, and——" Here her voice also was lowered, and at the most interesting point; and the squire could only catch the name of Phillippa la Catanese, an extraordinary woman, who, from the condition of a washer-woman, in Sicily, had risen to be the favourite of the late King Robert, and was now the titled confidant of the young Queen; and the names of some other ladies, and of some attendants about the person of Joanna.

The next person who spoke was the Grand Marshal of the kingdom.

"We have gone too far to retract now," said he ; "the time for deliberation is past ; Andreasso must die this very night ! I swear by this holy wafer of the mass I have brought hither in my bosom for the purpose, to do my part ! let all present repeat my oath.

Gaetano stayed to hear the dreadful vow pronounced by a number of voices, and then rushed horror-struck from the corridor. For some minutes his brain was confused, and he knew not what to do, or what was passing around him, but recovering himself he determined to hasten to Naples, to fulfil his oath with the King's nurse,—to save, if possible, the King's life, which his generous and humane disposition would have induced him to attempt, even had he never been bound to Isoldina. He ran to the boat, rowed himself from the accursed islet to terra firma, and telling the squires on the shore, he was going on hasty and sudden business for his master, he mounted his horse and galloped towards Naples.

He rode with tremendous speed : the agitation of his mind prevented his attending to the road, which was none of the best, and as he was crossing some rough lava that lay at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, his gallant but overwrought steed fell under him, and he was thrown with such violence that he was for some time deprived of his senses.

In this state Gaetano was found by some peasants, who carried him to the Torre del Greco, in those days a small village. When he recovered his senses, he found himself so severely bruised and weakened by loss of blood, which flowed from a cut he received on his head from the hard lava, that he could not continue his journey, nor for some time even stand on his feet. His very anxiety to reach the capital and deliver the horrid secret he had obtained, perhaps added to the giddiness of his head and his inability of doing so. His message could not be trusted to a third person. The condition of the young man was every way distressing ; and when he mounted his horse, which he could not do at all till near the time of sunset, he was so debilitated and

giddy, that he was obliged to grasp the high pommel of his saddle, and to ride on at a slow pace. He had not more than five or six English miles to go, but at the rate he went, and from being frequently obliged to stop, he was a long while in performing them, and did not reach the city of Naples until long after the gates were closed for the night. Being well known to the guards as a person about the court, and attached to one of the greatest officers of the kingdom, he readily induced them to go and obtain their captain's permission to open the gate ; but this produced another delay, and altogether he did not arrive at the Castel-nuovo until the third hour of the night. When there, he learned to his utter dismay, that the King and Queen and their court had gone to Aversa at an early hour that same morning !

What was to be done now ? Isolda the nurse always accompanied the King, nor was there a single person of the court left at the Castel-nuovo, to whom he could venture to declare the horrid conspiracy ; not one of whose sentiments he could be sufficiently sure, to know, that in betraying his noble master, he should not speak to his master's fellow-conspirator, or one, at least, who would wish success to the enterprise against the King and the Hungarians, and at once sacrifice him for his interference. Friar Robert was indeed in the city, but shut up in a strong palace, as in a fortress, with a set of brawling, drunken Hungarians. Any access to him at that hour, and by an Italian, was very dubious ; Gaetano dreaded besides his cruel implacable character, and though he would save the King's life, a lingering attachment to his countrymen as opposed to the Hungarians, or a sense of the chivalrous faith due to his knight, made him anxious to do so without directly sacrificing his master ; or he felt that he would prevent the murder of one, without entailing the certain death of many, whom the vindictive monk would not fail to sacrifice, and that too in the cruellest and most horrid manner. But while he was lost in agonizing deliberation, the deed might be done ! The Grand Marshal had fixed that very night for the murder of the King ; and it was certain the conspirators must have better information as to the royal movements than he had possessed. Could he but reach

Aversa before them and warn the nurse, the royal residence might be put in a state of defence, the person of the King secured, and the conspirators, seeing themselves discovered, might seek safety in timely flight, and he might gain his bride without the torture and death of his master ! But Aversa was six miles distant, and both himself and his steed were wounded and exhausted ; yet had they been fresh as for a race, it would have been of no avail ; for, when Gaetano presented himself at the Capuan gate, which opened on the road to Aversa, with the fatality that had attended him all this day, he found it guarded by a company of Hungarians, who positively refused him egress at that late hour, and, on his insisting with violence, placed him under arrest.

Meanwhile the conspirators, having finished their deliberations, about two hours after noon, left the little castle at the end of the bay, and took the nearest road to Aversa by the routes of Mount Vesuvius. To men, bent like them on deeds of secrecy and blood, every trifling event excites suspicion and alarm ; and though they could not conceive that the Grand Marshal's squire was in possession of their secret, or being in possession of it, would dare to disclose it to living being, or betray his master, the intelligence of his extraordinary evasion made them hurry on their journey, and feel uneasy until they reached Aversa, and found everything quiet and as they wished.

They had entered the little Norman town\* by different gates, and now to avoid remark, repaired in separate parties of twos or threes, and at short intervals of time, to the royal residence, where their offices and rank gave them free access at all hours. The conspirators themselves had induced the young King and Queen to go to Aversa, as for a holiday, for they would have found the execution of their plot difficult at Naples, where Andreasso was habitually surrounded by so many guards and friends : and their unsuspecting, thoughtless victim now received them with smiles, and promised them a jovial *villegiatura*, with hunting and hawking, dancing and banqueting.

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\* The Norman origin of Aversa will be found in the tale of "The Norman Pilgrims."

After they had made certain arrangements in the castle, where they had many accomplices, the conspirators arranged their toilettes, and went to pay their respects to their young and lovely Queen, who was breathing the cool evening air in the delicious gardens of a Celestine monastery adjoining the abode of royalty.

Happy at being relieved from the surveillance and odious presence of the monk Robert ; happy with the thoughts of the splendour and festivity of her approaching coronation ; happier still at the heart-filling, tender prospect of being soon a mother, Joanna's beauties had at that moment all their éclat and animation, with a touching expression calculated to win every heart. Like Mary Queen of Scots, to whose adventures and character her own have been so frequently compared, Joanna possessed charms the most calculated to impress the imagination with enduring pictures, which have been sighed over even by those "who have felt themselves compelled to believe all or much of what her enemies laid to her charge." And her painted portraits, though executed in the infancy of art, haunt the mind even like Mary Stuart's, whose countenance, to use again the language of Scott, "is as familiar to us as the mistress of youth, or the favourite daughter of advanced age." Brantome, the passionate admirer of every princess of French extraction, goes even beyond his wonted enthusiasm when he speaks of Joanna I. of Naples, whose beauty, he maintains, far exceeded that of Petrarca's Laura. "Her portrait, which is still to be seen," says he, "shows that she was more angelic than human. I saw it at Naples in a number of places, where it is treasured with the greatest care. Certainly this was a beautiful princess, whose countenance displayed great sweetness with a beautiful majesty. This fine portrait represents her as *all beauty, sweetness and true majesty*." To the animated personal charms of the original must be added the qualities of elegance, wit and genius, with the sweetness of a voice that could not be heard without tender emotion. Whatever might be the regret of the high-minded Princess at her husband's dissipation, indolence, and levity, she does not appear to have regarded him with other than kind sentiments ; and now, on the very eve of the murder of

which she was to be accused, she loitered affectionately on his arm through the acacia-groves of the Celestine garden, and at separating good-naturedly admonished him not to commit excesses in the banqueting-hall, but to retire betimes, and on the morrow morning they would fly their hawks together in the old woods of Atella.

The young King was more than usually gay at the evening board; he drank to his approaching coronation, and the conspirators echoed his toast with the rest; but in Andreasso intemperance was already an inveterate habit, and he remained carousing with his Hungarians long after the Grand Marshal, the Seneschal, and the other nobles, who, from the more sober habits of the Italians, did not excite any surprise by their early retreat, had left the banqueting hall to prepare the last scene of the tragedy.

Hour passed after hour, each of them seeming an age to the anxious conspirators; but still the clatter of the wine-cups, the unmeaning witticism in unintelligible Hungarian, the roaring laugh, and chorused song, were heard from the hall.

"Will the drunkard feast all night?" whispered Tommaso and Masolo da Bologna, his chamberlains, who had engaged to open his chamber door to the murderers, "will he *never* come?"

But staggering from the wine he had swallowed, and singing a bacchanalian catch, the victim came at length. The next moment, and as the monks were chaunting their midnight service in the contiguous monastery, the conspirators glided along the corridor, and took their post near the door of his apartment. The corridor was open on one side, and afforded a view of the quiet alleys, flowered parterres, and waving trees of a garden, all sleeping placidly in the rays of the moon, whose lovely serene face ought to have inspired pure, peaceful, and holy feelings. But the voice, or the apparition of an angel from Heaven, would hardly have stayed those desperate men in the execution of their hellish design.

In a few minutes Masolo da Bologna came out from Andreasso's apartment to the corridor. "All is right," whispered he; "the

sot has not gone into the Queen's chamber, drunk as he is, but has betaken himself to a couch in an outer room."

"Then let us finish our work at once," said Beltrame.

"First let us see whether all is quiet!" whispered the chamberlain, and he went along the corridor, and down-stairs to the banqueting hall to listen.

"Not a soul is moving save ourselves; the Hungarians are buried in wine and sleep, and snoring like hogs," said Masolo returning; and he leading the way, the Count of Tralizzo and Beltrame rushed into the King's apartment. The noise of their steps aroused Andreasso; and wondering what such an intrusion could mean, he rose and went to meet them. Then Beltrame seized him by the hair of the head, which he wore very long, and endeavoured with all his force to throw him to the ground.

"This is but a dirty game, and foul play!"\* cried the King, whose head was confused with drink, and he seized with his teeth the hand of Beltrame, which he never let go until he bit off all he had seized with his teeth.†

The Count of Tralizzo then threw a rope with a sliding knot round Andreasso's neck, and he pulling with all his force at one end of the rope, and Beltrame at the other, they did not stop until King Andreasso fell strangled and dead in the midst of the traitors.

"'Tis done! 'tis soon over!" said the chamberlain Tommaso da Bologna, in a horrid whisper, after having stooped down and looked at the blackened face, and felt the heart of the ill-fated Prince; "but where shall we dispose of the sot's carcass?"

"What matters it?" said the implacable Grand Marshal; "'tis as well here as elsewhere; he will only look as if he had been choked in his wine!"

"Not so! in the condition our young Queen is in, the sudden sight of her dead husband might be fatal to her; we must carry him hence!" said the Count of Tralizzo.

\* "Questo è un sozzo giuoco."—Polistore. † Id.

"Ay! but whither? but whither?" inquired several of the conspirators in the same breath.

"Let us bury him in the deserted stable at the foot of the castle!" said the chamberlain, Masolo da Bologna.

"Let us throw him into the garden as if he had fallen over from the corridor and broken his neck," said the Count of Tralizzo.

"That deep mark round his neck will tell another tale," said another of the murderers, now shuddering as he held down a lamp and saw the narrow purple line, the only and insignificant sign of the dread violence that had slain a King.

"It matters not what tale is told," said the Grand Marshal; "the deed is done, and we the doers must not be caught here just yet; but who hoped for secrecy? Let us only remove the body hence from the vicinity of Queen Joanna, and then away!"

"But whither shall we carry it?" again inquired several of the conspirators, who felt, the very moment after the perpetration of the murder, all that uncertainty of purpose, that want of accord, and that confusion of ideas, which generally accompany heinous crime.

"This is the trifling of women and children," said the fierce Lord Marshal: "let the Hungarian drunkard be thrown into the old stable forthwith!"

The two brothers, the Chamberlains Tommaso and Masolo da Bologna, then raised the lifeless body in their arms, and assisted by Caffarello and Messer Raimondo da Napoli, and followed by the rest of the assassins, they carried it out of the chamber, and with silent stealthy steps along the corridor, in chambers opening on which slept many "who should against the murderer shut the door."

At the extremity of the corridor, a narrow staircase, cut within the thick wall of the castle, led almost directly to the deserted stable. The foremost of the conspirators gently opened the door at the head of the staircase; but when those who bore the corpse looked forward into its horrid, grave-like obscurity, they would not proceed farther without a light. The fierce Lord Marshal, cursing



their imbecility, glided back to Andreasso's now empty room, and brought a cresset-lamp.

By this light, which dimly illuminated the damp, dark passage, the haggard faces of the conspirators, and the horrid discoloured countenance of their victim, which most of them dreaded to look at, and yet could not avoid so doing, they began to descend the rough steps; but they had not gone far, when several of them whispered simultaneously, "Hark! what noise is that! Hark there again!"

They paused. A hollow murmuring sound penetrated the thick walls by small loop-holes cut in it here and there, to admit air. They listened for a moment, breathless and motionless: the sounds came again; and though they were only the gentle waving and rustling of the trees in the garden agitated by the night-breeze, they filled their guilty ears with terror.

"'Tis the noise of an approaching troop of horse!"\* said Masolo da Bologna, becoming even still more ghastly pale.

"Ay! 'tis the beat of horses' hoofs, and they come nearer and nearer:—we shall be surprised and caught with the murdered King in our hands!" rejoined Caffarello; and on the impulse of affright and horror, they all rushed back to the open corridor, and throwing the body over the parapet into the garden, fled instantly from the palace by a secret passage that led beyond the walls of Aversa to a quiet road in the direction of Atella.

Scarcely had the regicides quitted the corridor, when Isolda, the affectionate nurse, waking from her peaceful sleep, went towards the chamber of the King, to inquire how he fared, as was her wont to do frequently every night. She saw the couch in the outer chamber, on which he often slept, tumbled and pressed as though he had been lying on it; but not finding him there, she passed on to the sleeping apartment of the Queen Joanna, who sleeping too soundly to be disturbed by the very slight noise made by her husband's murderers, had also just awoke when it was too late to

\* "E portandolo dal Palazzo per una scala, parve loro di udire gente da cavallo."—Polistore.

save him, and was sitting mournfully on the side of her solitary bed.

"Where is my Lord the King?" inquired the nurse with much agitation, on seeing the Queen alone.

"I know not where he is! Of a certainty, thy Lord is too young and imprudent to pass his nights thus, away from his wife!" said the Queen reproachfully.

"I must find my Lord,—I must find my dear Lord, imprudent though he be, and naughty!" cried the devoted nurse; and taking a lamp in her hand, she went searching through the dark silent castle for Andrea.\*

In the banqueting-hall she found several Hungarians snoring in the scene of their excesses, and the light of her lamp neither woke them, nor discovered to her him whom she sought. She had visited many other places, and was returning with now serious alarm along the corridor, when she happened to look over the parapet, and discovered the body of Andrea lying in the moonlight. Returning hastily to the Queen, she told her that the King was sleeping in the garden.

"Prithee let him sleep on!" said Joanna angrily. "After my prayers on the eve of yesterday,—after all my prayers, that he would refrain from such debaucheries,—to be again in such a state! Prithee let him sleep! and may his cool couch sober him, and give him a better lesson than I can do!"

But the nurse, "because she loved her Lord as a mother,"† hurried with maternal solicitude down to the garden, where, to her unspeakable horror, she found the King, not sleeping, but dead—cold dead, with the rope that had strangled him round his neck. He had on his long hose, one white and one red, as was his fashion to wear them; and in his mouth he had that piece of flesh which he had torn with his teeth from the hand of the traitor Beltrame. Then the nurse began to lament aloud, and with

\* "Domandò alla Reina: *Dove è il mio Signore?* Rispose la Reina: *Io non lo so dove si sia: certamente il tuo Signore è troppo giovine.*"—Polistore.

† "Perciocchè amava il suo Signore siccome madre."—Polistore.

sobs and tears warned the Queen and the other inmates of the Castle of Aversa of the dreadful tragedy that had been enacted.\*

The widowed Joanna, the nurse, the Hungarians, and all those who remained about the palace, were so terrified and confounded by the horrible event, that they knew not what to do ; and the King's body, carried into the adjoining church of the Celestines, lay there some days without sepulture : but Ursillo Minutolo, a gentleman and Canon of Naples, went to Aversa, and had it brought to the capital, and interred it at his own expense in the Cathedral of Naples, and in the Chapel of St. Louis, where his tomb is to be seen even to this day.†

When the Queen was sufficiently recovered from her consternation and horror, she repaired to her capital, where, in spite of some popular surmises and whispered implications, the nobility and clergy generally were so far from suspecting her of the murder of her husband, that they paid her visits of condolence, and counselled with her how to punish the murderers. The friar Robert and the Hungarian party dreaded to move out ; and throwing up at this critical moment the management of affairs they had so abused, everything was left to the young Queen, who prudently assembled round her the wisest and most virtuous of her grandfather's ministers and nobles, and by their advice committed to Count Ugo del Balzo the charge of investigating the bloody transaction, and of bringing the guilty to justice.‡

Meanwhile the condition of the amorous squire of the Grand Marshal, whom we left in the hands of the Hungarian guard, was most painful and critical. He was still in custody when the astounding intelligence arrived of the King's murder ; and as he had been so eager to go out of the gate that led to the Aversa road, and at a late hour, the very night of the murder ; and being known moreover as one frequently about the court, he was detained under strong suspicion, and finally was ordered to prepare himself to confess or to undergo tortures, on account of the foul assassination

\* Il Libro di Polistore. † Angelo di Costanzo.

‡ Giannone, Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli.

he had so endeavoured to prevent. Whilst he lay in his dungeon, he was informed that his master, by fleeing from the country, had acknowledged his guilt; and having no longer sufficient motives, supposing the Grand Marshal in safety, to be silent at the cost of excruciating anguish, and perhaps death to himself, he disclosed all he knew, which was no more than what he heard at the castle in the bay. Fortunately for the squire, Raimondo da Napoli, one of the murderers, was discovered and arrested at the same time; and on being put to the question, disclosed the same names, and in everything confirmed the revelation Gaetano had made. The squire, however, was still detained in prison; and it was not till after many months, when several of the persons guilty, and some only suspected of the horrible conspiracy, had been punished with detestable tortures and death, and Isolda the faithful nurse had followed her king to the grave, that Joanna, moved by the melancholy tale of his love, and unmerited sufferings, procured his liberation, and united him to Isoldina, whom he had doubly won by twice perilling his life for her.

In asserting or implying the innocence of the lovely young Queen Joanna, I do not consider that I have transgressed against history. After a careful comparison of the different cotemporary, or nearly cotemporary, authorities, which I made at Naples some years since, and which is much too long to be inserted in a work like this, the impression left on my mind was, that she was not guilty of, nor privy to, her husband's murder. This also seems to be Mr. Hallam's opinion, which is always entitled to deference or respect. The cause of the young Queen is pleaded at length by the ingenious author of the "*Historical Life of Joanna of Sicily, Queen of Naples, &c.*," a modern work, which does not appear to be so well-known as it ought to be.

The generality of historians of other nations, who have reversed the process of De Sade, and have *counted* the suffrages instead of *weighing* them, have indeed unhesitatingly declared Joanna guilty; but I would repeat, as I have felt, the words of Lord Byron's pre-

face to his "Marino Faliero," (another character, whom unexamining historians have treated lightly and unjustly :) "I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate!"

The defence of old Brantome is a singular piece of argument and composition. He reprehends the Pesarese historian, Colenuccio, for telling the ridiculous tale, that a day or two before his assassination, as Andrea suddenly entered the Queen's apartment, he found her making a silken rope, and, on asking her for what object, Joanna said laughingly, "It is to hang you with, my husband!" and the irascible Frenchman calls all the Italian historians foul calumniators of the fame of the French princes and princesses, and very great liars!—though, had he given himself the trouble to examine them, he would have found his own view of the case taken, and the innocence of his heroine Joanna maintained, by the best of those writers.

But Brantome's defence of Joanna I. is nothing as a curiosity, compared with his palliation of the libidinous Joanna II. Those who have read his quaint pages cannot have forgotten the joyous manner in which he felicitates one of the Queen's husbands on the mode of his death: "Eh! où pût-il mieux mourir," &c.

The accounts of the way in which Andrea was put to death at Aversa are perplexingly various. I have followed, almost to the letter, that of Polistore, which is by far the most picturesque and striking, and as likely to be true as any of them. It is inserted in that all-complete mine of Italian chronicle, Muratori's collection of "*Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*."



## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### *Fifteenth Century.*

1400.—“WE shall find,” says Muratori, “the fifteenth century not less agitated by wars and revolutions than the barbarous ages which preceded it.”

The last year of the preceding century, and the first of this, (while the plague had revived,) were remarkable for the numerous processions and pilgrimages of the Bianchi, or White Penitents, who, enveloped in linen robes, or rather bed-sheets, that covered even their faces, went through Italy, from the Alps to the Sea of Messina, singing litanies, and imploring for afflicted earth the peace and mercy of Heaven. Whole populous districts—men, women, and children—were seen to join the ghost-like progresses. During the reign of this devout influenza no violence was committed, no treason meditated, and Italy breathed in peace; but it was immediately followed by new plots on the part of the ambitious Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo Visconti. At his instigation, Lazaro Guinigi, who governed the Republic of Lucca with much talent and firmness, had been assassinated by his own brother the preceding year, and he now encouraged farther sanguinary revolutions, in order to make himself master of that little state. There was this year another conspiracy at Florence, headed by the Ricci, Alberti, and Medici.

1401.—Robert, the newly elected emperor, went to try once more the Imperial fortune in Italy. He sustained a signal defeat in a ranged battle in the Brescian territory, from the Italian troops of the Duke of Milan, commanded by Giacompo del Verme, Carlo Malatesta of Rimini, and other Italian captains, and was forced to retreat towards the Alpine pass of Trent. This was the first battle the Italian and German troops had fought together for many years. The Italians showed they had made some progress in the art of war.

1402.—Gian Galeazzo attacked Bentivoglio, the Signior of Bologna, who was defeated, and finally massacred. On the 3rd of September, the successful tyrant of Milan died of the plague. He was no sooner dead than the state he had enlarged “by the dark alternation of perfidy and violence” fell to pieces.

1404.—The political balance of Italy was restored for a short time. The arms of Florence, wielded chiefly by condottieri, or mercenaries, reduced the

Ghibelline nobles of the Apennines, whose castles overhung her territory, to obedience and subjection.

1406.—The Venetians, who had conquered Padua, infamously put to death, in prison, Francesco Novello da Carrara, the signior of that state, and the following day murdered his two brave sons.

The unfortunate Republic of Pisa was subjugated by Florence, after a dreadful siege.

The election of Pope Gregory XII. took place this year, and served to prolong the duration of the great schism.

1409.—Gregory XII. and his rival Benedict XIII. were both deposed by the Council at Pisa, who elected Alexander V. But the deposed pontiffs resisted; and the Catholic world had the scandal to see three Popes waging a war of Bulls and excommunications with each other.

1410.—During the dissensions of the Popes, and the general weakness of Upper Italy, occasioned by wars and factions, the kingdom of Naples was animated, and not for the first time, with the hope of extending its dominion or supremacy over the whole of the peninsula. The crown of Naples was now worn by Ladislaus, who was warlike and ambitious, talented and unprincipled. Pretending to act as protector of Gregory XII., one of the Popes, he was already master of Rome, and of a great part of the ecclesiastical state. But Florence was wealthier than Ladislaus: she bought over many of the mercenaries, who mainly composed his army; brought his old rival Louis of Anjou into Italy with an army, raised him up enemies on every side, and finally drove him from Rome and back on his kingdom of Naples.

1411.—Louis of Anjou defeated Ladislaus at Rocca-Secca, near the Garigliano, within his own states, but was soon afterwards obliged to abandon his enterprises and Italy.

1412.—Under the mediation of the Florentine Republic, Ladislaus made peace; but the following year that restless prince, with a Neapolitan army, suddenly sacked Rome, that experienced all the horrors of barbarian warfare, and conquered anew the whole of the Papal states.

1414.—That monarch was now in the zenith of his power:—his dominions extended to the confines of Tuscany; he commanded, besides inferior hosts, fifteen thousand of the finest gens-d'armes of Italy, which country he had every prospect of reducing, when he died of poison, or the effects of excessive debauchery.

1418.—The Council of Constance at last put an end to the disgraceful schism of the Church by electing Otho Colonna, who assumed the title of Martin V.

The strength of Milan had revived under the government of Filippo Maria, and by the arms of the brave Conte Carmagnola—and we find her again conquering and murdering among her neighbours Piacenza, Lodi, and Como. This tyrant Filippo Maria had a wife, Beatrice Tenda, to whom he owed

almost everything, put to death on a public scaffold, under an infamous accusation of adultery.

1421.—Filippo Maria obtained the Signiory of Genoa, which he followed up by making extensive conquests in Lombardy.

1422.—The brave Swiss pikemen, the confines of whose territory had been encroached upon by Filippo Maria, inflicted a sanguinary punishment on the gens-d'armes of the Milanese at Arbedo, near Bellinzona. But Count Carmagnola retained possession of the Levantine valley; and Filippo Maria, the Duke of Milan, now asserted a power from the Ligurian sea to the summit of Mount St. Gothard, and from the frontiers of Piedmont to the confines of the ecclesiastical states,—a larger extent of dominion than had fallen to the obedience of any prince of Upper Italy since the overthrow of the old kingdom of the Lombards.

1424.—War between the Duke of Milan and the Republic of Florence, to the disadvantage of the latter.

1426.—Venice, that, since the exhausting war of Chiozza, had recovered much of her lost territories and her spirit, allied herself with Florence against the arbitrary and ambitious Duke of Milan.

1427.—The great Carmagnola having been ungratefully treated by the Duke of Milan, had entered the service of Venice, for whom he this year gained a splendid victory over his late master at Macalo, upon the Oglio.

1432.—Witnessed the atrocious ingratitude of the Venetians, whose detestable oligarchy tortured, and then beheaded Count Carmagnola.

1433.—Peace was made between the States of Upper Italy, at Ferrara, and Venice obtained splendid acquisitions.

1434.—Another revolution of Florence, which summoned Cosmo de' Medici from exile to exercise a supreme control over the government of the state, "commenced the last act in the great drama of Florentine liberty, of which the descendants of Cosmo were to complete the destruction."

1435.—Joanna II. of Naples, who had succeeded to her brother Ladislaus, and whose reign had been as fatal to her country as that of the more unfortunate, but every way worthier Joanna I., died this year, leaving her crown to be disputed by Alfonso of Arragon, and Regnier of Anjou. After the unhappy country had been for seven more years desolated by the war of parties, and Alfonso subjected to great vicissitudes of fortune, he was finally established on the throne of the Two Sicilies in 1442.

The Genoese rose against the Milanese, and recovered their liberty.

1437.—A new war broke out between the Duke of Milan and the allied Republics of Florence and Venice.

1441.—Peace was made under the mediation of Francesco Sforza, a skilful condottiero, or military adventurer, who had acquired great reputation and power throughout Italy.

1447.—Francesco Sforza had scarcely restored peace to others when a league  
ITALY.



was formed against himself by the Church, that had previously given him the March of Ancona in fief, as a reward for his services, which had secured Romagna to the See of Rome. Florence and Venice aided Sforza. Filippo Maria Visconti, his father-in-law, but one of his bitterest enemies, died. The Milanese again established a Republic; and, giving the command of their armies to Sforza, he thus far triumphed over his enemies.

1450.—Francesco Sforza, who had little respect for republican institutions, or conscience of any sort, became Duke of Milan, and as arbitrary a tyrant as the Visconti. By the middle of the fifteenth century the Dukes of Savoy had consolidated a powerful government in the west of Italy; and Piedmont, hitherto little noticed, will figure in the after annals of the peninsula.

1451.—The elevation of Francesco Sforza to the ducal throne of Milan had again changed the unstable system of Italian alliances and politics. Alfonso of Naples, and the Republic of Venice, joined against him and Florence. The minor states were drawn in on one side or the other. The commencement of general hostilities was for a short time retarded by the presence of the new emperor, Frederic III., but he only went to Rome to be crowned, and then left Italy.

1452.—A general war raged throughout Italy, which was only stopped by the general panic produced in—

1454.—By the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, who seemed already to menace Italy. Peace was then made at Lodi; and under the guarantee of the Pope, a quadruple league was formed between the sovereigns of Naples and Milan, and the Republics of Florence and Venice, for the preservation of the tranquillity of Italy. This year the oligarchy of Venice made itself still more odious by the election of a permanent committee of three Inquisitors of State.

1457.—The wrongs of the old Doge Foscari were ended in death,—he breaking a blood-vessel as he heard the great bell of St. Mark announce the election of another Doge of Venice.

1458.—The very distinguished soldier and statesman Alfonso of Naples, died as he was prosecuting a successful war against Genoa, which republic had become already a prey to worse than her old dissensions. His successor, Ferdinand, was unpopular. The barons of the kingdom offered the crown to Prince John of Anjou; and the old wars of party between the Angevins and the Arragonians were renewed, to the dear cost of the kingdom. After a six years' struggle, Ferdinand of Arragon triumphed over his rival, and remained in quiet possession of the throne.

1463.—Venice, whose foreign conquests were straitened by the advancing Turks, boldly made war on the Ottoman empire; beginning an arduous struggle, in which for many years she reaped great honour, and was one of the champions of Christendom. Pope Pius II. preached a crusade against the Mussulmans; but Europe, that once with fanatic profusion had thrown out

her millions upon Asia, would now hardly listen to the call, though the Turks were at her doors, and she had to defend her own territories.

1464.—Cosmo de Medici died, after having governed the Athens of the Middle Ages with uninterrupted success for thirty years, and enriched her with all the wonders of art—benefits perhaps dearly purchased by the prostration of liberty.

1466.—Francesco Sforza died at Milan, and was succeeded on the ducal throne by his son Galeazzo Maria, who, after an infamous, debauched reign of ten years, was murdered, in the church of St. Stefano, by the Olgiati.

1471.—Negropont, the most important of the Venetian possessions in the Archipelago, was conquered by the Turks, and Italy menaced by a tremendous armament, commanded by Mahomet II. The greatest alarm prevailed throughout Italy, and the Pope renewed the League of 1455 for the common defence.

1472.—The Turks appeared for the first time in Italy, but only on a short, predatory excursion into Friuli.

1477.—The Turks again penetrated into Friuli, defeated the Venetians, spread themselves in the open country between the Isonzo and the Tagliamento; passed the latter of these rivers, and ravaged the country with fires, that were visible by night from the towers of Venice itself; but on repeating their visit the next year, they were defeated by the better prepared Venetians.

1478.—Was famous in Florence for the so often described conspiracy of the Pazzi, who murdered Giuliano de' Medici in the cathedral church, but only strengthened the absolute government of his brother Lorenzo.

1479.—Venice made peace with the Ottomans, after fifteen years of the most arduous warfare in which she had ever been engaged. During this war she lost, besides the Negropont, the city of Scutari and a part of Albania; but gained—not by arms, and from the Ottomans, but by treachery, and from a weak Christian Prince—the rich and beautiful island of Cyprus.

But during this war the losses of Genoa were much greater than those of Venice, and she gained no Cyprus to set off against them. The conquest of Constantinople placed the key of the Black Sea in the hands of the Turks, who soon obtained possession of all the Genoese colonies on the shores of that sea.

1480.—Lodovico Sforza, commonly called the Moor, usurped the government of Milan, in the name of his nephew the young Duke.

The Turks took Otranto, in the kingdom of Naples, and again spread consternation throughout Italy.

1481.—Otranto was retaken by the Neapolitans.

1482.—The ambitious Pontiff, Sixtus IV., made a league with Venice and other states, to despoil the house of Este, and thus excited a new war in Italy. The Pope, finding the business an unprofitable one, signed a peace; guaranteed to the house of Este the integrity of its dominions, and excommunicated

his late allies the Venetians, who disregarded his Bulls, and continued the war on their own account ; nor did they terminate it until by the treaty of Bagnolo they had enriched themselves with a considerable extent of territory at the expense of the Este family.

1485.—Pope Innocent VIII. supported a revolt of the Neapolitan barons against Ferdinand their King, to whom he had owed his elevation to the Papedom. Lorenzo de' Medici for Florence, and Lodovico Sforza for Milan, contracted an alliance with the Neapolitan King, against the party headed by the Pope. Italy was again involved in a general war, but never was war more bloodless. In the battle of Lamentana, the only one on record, the Duke of Calabria, the son of King Ferdinand, gained a complete victory, by fairly pushing his opponents off the field, and taking a few prisoners. During a contest of several hours, not a single soldier was either killed or wounded ! so farcical had become the once tragical warfare of the Italians. But the blood that had not flowed in the field was shed in the dungeon and on the scaffold, by the vindictive King Ferdinand, as soon as he could secure peace.

1488.—Genoa relapsed again to the yoke of Milan, an Adorno governing it as lieutenant of the Duke of Milan, Lodovico Sforza.

1490.—The public faith and credit of Florence were violated, to save Lorenzo de' Medici from bankruptcy. Lorenzo, who had outlived the last spark of Florentine freedom, died two years after.

Italy (a rare occurrence !) enjoyed some years of peace, but her apprehensions were reasonably awakened by the gradual consolidation of gigantic powers beyond the Alps, and the attitude of France and Germany, who were so soon to make her the field of grander warfare. Lodovico Sforza attempted to form a general league for her protection against the Ultramontanes. Had he succeeded, despite his own tyranny, he would have been entitled to the gratitude of the Italians ; but he was thwarted by Piero de' Medici, by the King of Naples, by the paltry animosities of the innumerable little states of the peninsula, and by the treacherous, selfish spirit that had corrupted the whole soul of Italian politics.

1493.—In consequence of a powerful Italian league (at the head of which were Florence and Naples) formed against himself, Lodovico Sforza invited Charles VIII. of France to cross the Alps, and thus sealed the doom of the independence of Italy, that, three years before, he had the nobleness of soul to cherish !

1494.—Ferdinand of Naples, whose whole reign had been tempestuous, died as the greatest of the storms was approaching. He was succeeded by his son Alfonso II., who inherited only a part of his talents and virtues, but more than all his vices.

The invited Charles VIII., who claimed the crown of Naples by the force of descent and testament, entered Italy by the Western Alps and Piedmont, where he was received as a friend. At Pavia he was met by his first inviter,

Lodovico Sforza, who supplied him with subsidies, and placed the resources of Milan at his disposal. As Lodovico's young nephew died, and he ascended his ducal throne just at this juncture, he was generally accused of having caused his relative's death by slow poison. At Florence, Piero de' Medici made an abject submission to King Charles, which caused the temporary expulsion of the Medici family from Florence. The Pisans, protected by a French force Charles left them, threw off the Florentine yoke. Meeting no resistance, the French King entered Rome, whence a Neapolitan army had withdrawn on his approach, and received a terrified submission from the Pope Alexander VI. The unpopular King of Naples, Alfonso, abdicated in favour of his son Ferdinand, whose virtues deserved the throne, which he could not, however, defend for the present, for his army fled at the mere appearance of the French vanguard, from the frontiers to Capua; the towns of the never steady kingdom raised the banners of Anjou and revolt, and even Naples, his capital, became the scene of a popular insurrection. Moreover, the Condottieri in his pay betrayed him, and Ferdinand II. was obliged to fly to the little island of Ischia on the approach of Charles, who made an unopposed and triumphant entrance into Naples on the 24th of February, 1495.

1495.—But the wavering and perfidious Italian politics that had favoured his march, now prepared for Charles VIII. as rapid a retreat from his easy but transitory conquest. The Pope, the Republic of Venice, the Emperor Maximilian, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, treated about a league, to preserve Italy from French encroachment; and when the ever-suspicious Lodovico Sforza was won to their views, the ruin of Charles VIII., or of his enterprise, was completed. The French, after three months' occupation, abandoned the kingdom, retreated in great haste through the states of the Church and Tuscany, and though they asserted the military honour and prowess of their nation in the glorious battle of Fornova in Lombardy, where they thoroughly beat the leagued Italians, they were obliged to recross the Alps.

1496.—Ferdinand II. recovered his kingdom, and died a month after in the flower of his age. He was succeeded by his uncle Frederic, as amiable a prince as himself.

1498.—Ghirolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar and an extraordinary fanatic, who had governed Florence since the expulsion of the imbecile Piero de' Medici, was burned for heresy by order of the Pope. The faction of the Compagnacci, the enemies of Savonarola, then succeeded to the government of Florence.

Louis XII., who had succeeded Charles VIII., laid claim not only to Naples and Sicily, but to the Duchy of Milan.

1499.—The French crossed the Alps, and made an easy conquest of the Milanese territory. Lodovico Sforza, who had betrayed so many, was, after some variations of fortune, betrayed in his turn into the hands of the French,

who sent him into France, where he miserably ended his days in a dungeon ten years after.

The fourteenth century in Italy had been the epoch of the creative geniuses of her literature—the fifteenth became the age of her erudite. The study of the classics, Roman and Greek—the latter only just touched on by Petrarca and Boccaccio—was now prosecuted with extreme diligence and success. The influx of Greeks after the fall of Constantinople propagated the knowledge of the language of Homer and Demosthenes. Professorships were established in nearly every city. Printing, introduced in Germany, was improved in Italy, and the presses of Venice, Bologna, Milan, and Rome multiplied with prolific rapidity the copies of the ancient codices that were everywhere sought with enthusiastic earnestness. Medals, inscriptions, statues, *relievi*, and all the fragments of antiquity that could assist learning and improve taste, were collected at the same time; and little states and individuals spent sums on these objects that utterly confound our notions of political economy and of individual munificence. Among the numerous encouragers of literature and art, we may mention *some* of the Popes in Rome, the Medici in Florence, the Visconti, and then the Sforza in Milan, the Arragon dynasty in Naples, the Gonzaga, and the ancient family of Este in Mantua and Ferrara, and the Dukes of Urbino.

The cradle of Italian art, like that of Italian poetry, had been rocked on the stormy waves of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but painting and sculpture and architecture could not, from their nature, reach at once to a grade of excellence, as poetry had done—they required longer nursing; and it was in the fifteenth century that they indicated their approaching maturity, and that Michael Angelo and other wonderful geniuses were born, who in the following century carried those arts to a point of perfection which has not been surpassed.

To the fifteenth century, moreover, and to an Italian, is due the glory of the DISCOVERY of the NEW WORLD!



## The Condottiero.

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Le cose della guerra andavan zoppe.  
*La Secchia Rapita*, canto xii.

HERE'S success to the Companies of Adventure, and the honest calling of Condottieri!" exclaimed an English warrior, emptying a capacious cup of Aleatico, one of Tuscany's best wines.

"Success to the Condottieri!" was shouted by every voice of rather a numerous party; whilst *one* added, as a sort of grace, after he had finished his long draught, "And thanks to the eternal dissensions of these Italians, who have never grace enough to be at peace, nor courage enough to fight out their own quarrels, we shall never want employment in Italy."

"Very true, comrade: from the Alps to the end of the Calabrias, we have an open and a ready market. We are the free denizens and elect of the land. Like the prophets of old, or the troubadours of more modern times, with whom a tattered cloak and a prediction, a harp and a song, were passports everywhere, and everywhere sure of the best the country could produce, the Condottieri have only to carry their horses, their armour, and their lances, and they can command throughout Italy the means of leading a joyous life; and this, to my simple comprehension, is a pleasanter tenure than the holding of houses and lands, which, somehow or other, will be consumed and spent,—at least, I never

could keep mine on the banks of the Thames," added a blue-eyed warrior.

"Nor I mine by the Danube," said another.

"And as to my fat acres on the Rhine," said another of the party, "why, by this good wine-cup! what with dice, and women, and a little *drinking*, they had all gone over to another master before the grass began to grow over my old father's grave, and there was I left at the pleasant age of two-and-twenty with no other fortune than this old sword and this——"

"And they have never failed thee in glorious times like these," interrupted one of his comrades.

"I cannot say they ever have," answered the German;—"but pass round the flagon, and let us fill!"

"This is a choice cup of Italian wine—ruby-coloured, generous, and no headache in it," said an old soldier, after heaving a sigh, which pronounced the funeral elegy of somewhat more than a pint of Aleatico.

"As pleasant a drink, I protest, as ever I drank in France, from the day I emptied King John's flask on the field of Poitiers, to the time that, in search of employment, I crossed the Alps," added an English veteran, curling his light-brown mustachios as he spoke.

"I say the wines of Italy are four times as good as those of France, and I will maintain it arithmetically," said one of the old Englishmen who had before spoken.

"To the devil with thy arithmetic! What have calculations and accounts to do with us Condottieri, who carry a receipt for every bill at the end of our lances?—but thou canst never forget thou once kep'st a school at Windsor, and hadst to count the chalks for beer and mead (I wonder we could ever drink such stuff!) behind the bar of mine hostess of the Red Lion," retorted one of his countrymen.

"I care not for his unwarlike calling, or his beers, or his red lions," said a Frenchman pettishly; "but I should like to know how the wines of Tuscany here are better than those that grow in the plains of Champagne or the hills of Burgundy—four times better?"

"Why thus," said the ci-devant pedagogue, "they are twice as strong, and twice as cheap; and as two and two make four—eh! have I not proved it arithmetically?"

The schoolmaster's chuckle of triumph was interrupted by the angry Frenchman, who was still patriotic in matters of wines, though he had been drinking those of Italy for the last five-and-twenty years of his life; and there seemed every probability of a quarrel on this delicate subject, when a high-cheek-boned, red-haired, and lank old Scotchman coolly interrupted the noisy disputants, and said:—

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. We have here the wines of Italy, (he took a long draught to prove the fact,) but where are those of France? Hence, the wines of Italy are at least twice as good as those of France to *us*—and so let us show our proper sense of their merits by drinking them, and leave off talking, and be jolly."

The whole party agreed in this philosophical decision, and for some time showed their rational notions of joviality by a silence, only broken by the jingling contact of the flagon with the cup, or the occasional monosyllable of "Fill! fill!"

The first person who attempted to renew conversation was a young English knight, who, not finding employment at home, had but lately come to see service in Italy.

"All this is mighty pleasant," said he, "and our life is altogether a merry and comfortable life enough; but I confess I begin to be a-weary of it, and to sigh for a bold field where something like honour may be obtained!"

"Have a thought, my bold Sir Robert!" replied one of his aged countrymen; "honour is an empty name here. We have little chance of gaining it, except on each other's crests—and that methinks were not patriotic or natural. No, no! let us spend joyfully the money the unwarlike Italians give us for keeping up their feuds, and shed as little blood as may be."

"Ay, that is the maxim of us Condottieri! When these silky Signiors are so careful of their own persons, and in their own quarrels, why should we be so anxious to hack the good armour



off our backs, and peril life or limbs—for honour?" said another of the party.

"This may be all very true and very reasonable," replied Sir Robert; "but I had other notions in my head when the knight's spur was fastened to my boot, and I took up the lance which my good father bore at Cressy and Poitiers."

"I bore as good a lance as that," said one of the old Englishmen, "and found plenty of work for it in France—and a mighty deal of good it did me! Why, I tell ye, Sir Robert, when I followed Sir John Hawkwood to Italy, I had not the value of a second cuirass in my purse, but plenty of wounds scarred on my stupid hide. And even then, indeed, the great Sir John, who could not forget his old tricks, but would keep fighting here in Italy for Pisa or for Florence, for Milan, or the Pope, and in downright bloody earnest, led me into many a hot *melée*, at the end of which I had the satisfaction of hearing that such an Italian republic had gained a great victory over such another—which had only been disgraced by the cruelty of the foreign mercenaries!—Pretty honour, i' faith!"

"And then," continued another old soldier, "when we went about with the fierce Sir John, cutting off heads as though they had been heads of garlick, and lopping off limbs as though we had been pruning vines—storming a town here, and burning a harvest there—we were justly looked upon as devils by the poor natives, who, after all, had never done harm to us. And listen to the tales the Italian nurses tell to their children in the cradle, of the atrocities of the first companies of adventure, and of the Duke Guarnieri, and Fra Moriale, and Conrad Lando! Who can envy such glory as that? I tell ye, Sir Robert, you would not have found in those days the name of a Condottiero the ready passport to the graces of all those black-eyed Italian maidens you are so fond of."

"The last consideration is worth something," said the young knight; "but still I would be a-doing. I cannot help sighing for an opportunity of deserving the name and the arms I bear; sighing even for my old life in hardy England, my bow-shooting in old Sherwood, my hunt and cry of hounds, and——"

"Pshaw! Sir Robert," interrupted a fair, fat German; "when I first came to Italy, I thought and hankered after former days just as you do; but now I confess I care for no bows but the bow of a fiddle. I prefer the Italian song and the guitar to the yelping of curs; and as for hunting, why I love the pursuit of a plump donzella better than that of the sleekest doe."

"Here's to the black-eyed donzelle of Italy! Comrades, fill the cup up to the brim!" cried one of the bacchanalians.

"The donzelle of Italy to the brave Condottieri!" was the amendment of another, and the form in which the toast was drunk with deep devotion.

"Now, Fritz-Fribourg for a song!" roared out a jolly red-nosed toper from the banks of the Rhine.

"Ay! a song—a song to crown the toast!" was echoed by all present.

The fair, fat German who had expressed his gusto for fiddle-bows and guitars, then struck up a lively chansonette, which, for the intelligence of the cosmopolitish company was composed in a curious *pot-pourri* of Italian, French, Provençal, German, and English. The choice lyrical effusion was received with corresponding enthusiasm, all present joining in the chorus:—

Then oh for the Matchen—la bien-aimée!  
 Viva! viva la Donzella!  
 Huzza! for the Condottiero gay,  
 Qu'il gagne toujours la bella!  
 The Condottiero!—hurra!—hurra!—  
 Il Condottier' e la bella!

But as the songster's last verse contained a general comparison of the charms of Italian women with those of the rest of Europe, in which the turned-up noses of the French fair were spoken of somewhat disrespectfully, the peppery monsieur who had vindicated his country's wines, feeling also patriotic as to her women, would render them the same service. A dispute was begun by an assertion on the side of the Frenchman, that no taste could be expected from a heavy German who had never been at Paris; and it probably would have ended, as often happened among these

oddly composed companies, in a general broil and fighting, had not some of the knights who had authority over them imposed silence and drawn their attention to two important facts,—that the wine was all drunk out, and that it was time to determine whither they were to go to seek service.

"Our late mistress Pisa," argued one of the old knights, "has been so completely beaten and drained by Florence, that she is not likely to be able to give us even our arrears for many a day!"

"She paid us good gold whilst she could, but she is ruined, and 'No money no condottiero' is our motto: we must go to those who can pay," said another.

"Why not at once to Florence?—she has the gold that Pisa has lost. She is ever wealthy, and a most regular pay-mistress!" rejoined another of these precursors of Captain Dalgetty.

"To Florence!" mused the young English knight, Sir Robert, "to Florence, against whom we were only the other day fighting for Pisa!"

"Oh! that is of no consequence!" replied one of his seniors. "We Condottieri are accustomed to these sudden changes of service! I have seen the day when I have followed one banner at sunrise, and have been marching under its rival at sunset. If the Florentines want us, they will hire us; and as long as they can pay us, we need care for nothing else. When the wealthy burghers need us no longer, or money is all spent, we will leave them as we have left Pisa, and there will always be plenty of jealous quarrelsome states to engage us in Italy!"

"The Florentine bank is as punctual as the noon-day sun," said an old English warrior, "and very pretty and profitable service have I had from that republic in the days of the great Sir John; but as she is now rather well provided with men-at-arms, and as we are *rather* a numerous set of lances, I have been thinking that she might not find it expedient to engage us all, and that some of us had better look farther off for employers."

"There are the Visconti, the lords of Milan, who sent to us at Pisa a month ago, with offers of very fair pay. I and my comrades will even go thither," said a German knight

"There's the Can della Scala at Verona, who would be glad of a lance or so. The Adige is as pleasant as the Arno ; we will go to the Dog," said a French Condottiero.

"I should like to try the Venetians : I am told their bank is as punctual, and their pay as high as the Florentines'," said a third.

"There is the powerful family of the Este, who have the means of burnishing our armour," said a fourth.

"And the Malatesta, the Lords of Rimini, and the Polenta of Ferrara, and the——"

"For my part, I am anxious for a greater change," said Sir Robert, "and think I shall go on to offer my lance to the Pope, or perhaps to the Neapolitan King, at the end of Italy."

"Not so, not so !" whispered one of his old countrymen to the ardent young knight ; "you must with me to Florence, where the name alone of your uncle, the great Sir John Hawkwood, the Alexander or the Julius Cæsar of Condottieri, will procure you most honourable service and most favourable terms."

After some time spent in representation and argument, Sir Robert was induced by his senior to prefer the service of Florence ; and the other knights having made their arrangements, which were, that some were to go to Venice and others to Milan, the party rose from the green sward on which they had been carousing and counselling, and mounted their horses.

The scene from which these adventurers now broke up, to descend together into the lower valley of the Arno, was a shady, verdant little glen in the Monte di San Giuliano, the Mount (in the words of the graphic Dante,)

Perchè i Pisan veder Lucca non pono,\*

and which presents itself as so grand an object from the towers of the two cities it divides from each other.

As the chief Condottieri, and men-at-arms, encased in armour, with their lances in their rest, descended the steep sides of the mountain, followed by their military attendants, their pack-horses,

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\* L' Inferno, canto xxxiii.

or mules, that carried the light wardrobes and moveable property of the adventurers, the people of Lucca watched them from their walls, and shut their gates as they drew near.

But this inhospitality did not affect the soldiers of fortune, who had no intention of halting there, but rode quietly on by the left of the town, and continued their journey along the valley, halting at evening,

Come la mosca cede alla zanzara.\*

The Condottieri passed a joyous night at a delightful little village in the Val d'Arno, where they found in profusion that grand desideratum *il vin Aleatico*, both *dolce* and *asciutto*. The next morning they rode gaily on towards Florence, in the neighbourhood of which fair city those of the adventurers who were bound to Milan and Venice separated from the rest.

The separation of these soldiers of fortune of different countries, whom chance had thrown together in Italy, and who had been closely associated for some months, was in as friendly and affectionate a spirit as could be well expected from men of their habits.

"Adieu! Franc-étrier!" said an English to a French soldier;" "we have been comrades—the next time we may meet, it may be as enemies; but let us not forget the wine-cups we have pledged together, and that the hatred of our Italian employers is nothing to thee or to me!"

"Adieu, Brownlow!" replied the gay Frenchman; "the oldest friends must part! If we meet in the *mêlée*, my lance shall pierce no armour of thine; and I count that thou wilt leave my doublet untouched!"

"Remember my good precepts," said the *ci-devant* school-master of Windsor to a sturdy German, who, in the ardour of his affection and leave-taking, had griped his hand until the tears stood in his eyes; "remember my precepts, and that I have proved to thee mathematically that there can come no good of our belabouring one another in other people's quarrels. No! no! we Condottieri ought to respect and support each other, to shed no more of our good blood than may be held in a cupping-glass,

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\* Dante.

and always so to comport ourselves as to keep these signiors of Italians in constant need of our services, without giving to any one amongst them a decided preponderance !”

“Ay, ay !” added the lank Scotchman, who had expressed his preference of the things he had, to those he had not ; “their weakness is our strength, their quarrels are our harvest ! Should one of these Italian states ever prevail in the Peninsula, or should they ever have the good sense to make up their differences, or the courage to fight them out themselves, the calling of the Condottieri is at an end ! But the two last cases are very unlikely to happen. We can act in the spirit of our own interests ; and forgetting we are English or Scotch, French or German, only bear in mind that we are met for one object in this rich and pleasant land, and so shall we continue to lead a pleasant life ! Farewell, Franc-étrier, and bear in mind that when thou art in cash, thou owest me the value of a broad-sword !”

The farewell salutations of the superior Condottieri were accompanied by similar professions and good understanding ; and with the convenient arrangement, that the leaders of the parties in the service of Milan, Venice, and Florence, should keep their old comrades (in a rival service) regularly informed of what should pass or be projected. This might prevent many an awkward crisis, and could not but be very convenient to all parties.

And in this manner did the Condottieri by degrees cajole their employers with a simulacre of warfare, frequently carrying on and concluding campaigns without drawing blood ; until at last it became quite rare for a life to be lost in battle. The companies of adventure would meet and push each other off the field, as in a sham fight, whose movements and issue had all been previously arranged ; and Machiavelli describes combats that lasted all day, and ended in one or two men being wounded, and they not by sword or lance, perhaps, but from falls from their horses, or similar accidents.\*

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\* At the battle of Zagonara, which was celebrated all over Italy, Machiavelli says that no one died save Lodovico degli Obizzi and two of his men, who falling from their horses in marshy ground, were smothered in the mud !—1st. Fior. lib. iv. At the battle of Molinella he says, nobody was killed.—

The old English knight had not over estimated the influence of Sir Robert's name and connection with the admirable Hawkwood, or Acuto, as he was called by the Italians, who thus avoided a most awkward pronunciation, and gave a name expressive of the soldier's character. The Florentine Republic at once engaged him, with all the lances who followed him, giving very satisfactory pay, and placing the young knight in the most honourable rank of their mercenary captains.

The morning after his arrival and engagement, having paid a reverential visit to the tomb of his uncle, where his military ardour was reawakened by the sight of an equestrian statue the Republic had erected in gratitude for his services, he sallied forth with a brother Condottiero, a young Gascon, to take a view of the town of Florence. The admiration both of the Frenchman and Englishman was excited by the display of abundance, wealth, and luxury offered by this Italian city. The simplicity of the old citizens, so strikingly described by the Florentine chronicler, Giovanni Villani, had gone, and left no traces behind it. Instead of homely attire, the whole population, except the very menials, were clad in fine clothes, ornamented with fringe and gold; every citizen's wife they met, rustled in costly silks; and the magazines or shops everywhere dazzled their eyes with the treasures they contained. All this was the effect of the ingenuity, industry, and trade of the little Republic, which, spite of her eternal dissensions, had introduced wealth—and with wealth, luxury.

As Sir Robert went on lost in wonderment, his eye was attracted by some rare diamonds, and jewels, and *orfèverie* in the window of a splendid magazine; and he had stayed to gaze, when a glancing pair of black eyes entirely eclipsed those baubles. They belonged (the eyes, not the jewels) to a young Dama who was at that instant coming out of the shop, and who seemed to be

Lib. vii. The historian Ammirato, who accuses Machiavelli of quizzing these inoffensive battles, and rendering the militia of the times more ridiculous than they deserved, admits himself that in an action between the Neapolitan and Papal troops (mainly composed of mercenaries), not only no one was killed, but not a man wounded, though the battle lasted all day!

attracted or amused on her side by the animated curious face of the Gascon, or the fair yet manly countenance of the young Englishman, who fixed his large blue eyes on her black ones, as though he had been fascinated. The young lady, whose face was beautiful as her eyes were brilliant, remained for several seconds fixed, with her step half out of the door, her right-hand raised to her silken hood; she then walked on, drawing her hood, like a veil, over her head and face; but as she went, she turned round, again raised her silken hood, and a lovely smile was seen glancing in her eyes on one of the two Condottieri: it might indeed have been on *both*; but the Gascon, who had an excellent opinion of his own personal charms, determined it was exclusively on one, and that *one* was himself. "Saint Denis!" he exclaimed, "didst ever see such eyes as those? didst mark how they dwelt on me? Allons! Sir Robert, and let us follow this fair Florentine! Tête Dieu! and what a pair of feet and ankles she shows! and look, she turns again to see whether I observe her!"

Without disputing his companion's monopoly of the young Dama's glances, Sir Robert, who was a modest if not a bashful fellow, went with the Gascon through the streets of Florence, both keeping their eyes fixed on the lady, who tripped along followed by an old governess and two serving men. Fast, however, as she went, she found time, now and then, to turn round her head, and even to stop twice or thrice before some very pretty magazine, to see whose wares she was of course obliged just to withdraw her hood and to show her sweet face; and it some way or other happened each time, that ere she re-adjusted her modest head-covering, she sent a sunny smiling glance towards the young adventurers, each of which said glances the confident *avantageux* Gascon appropriated to himself, and chuckled over his *bonne fortune*. His satisfaction was, however, somewhat interrupted when he saw her presently after issue from a noble mansion to which they had traced her, and which they fancied to be her home, and, accompanied by a gallant-looking young Signior, take a street that terminated at one of the gates of the city, followed at a respectful distance by the



old governess and three domestics with led-horses, evidently caparisoned, not for a promenade, but a journey.

"Is she going to leave us?" said Sir Robert.

"Lost as soon as found!" replied the Gascon.

"It should seem, however, young as she looks, she is provided with a husband," said the Englishman.

"That spark is rather her brother," replied the Gascon. "See! he looks round at us, and his eye, his whole face, is as like hers as—but even if she had a——"

"She is mounting and off," interrupted the Englishman; and while he spoke, the fair Damina, assisted by the cavalier and a stepping-stone, found for the purpose near all the town-gates at the time, vaulted into the saddle, and patting an active little black palfrey on the neck, set off at a gay canter by the road that leads to the upper vale of the Arno. The cavalier and attendants mounted and followed; but as they went at a more sedate pace, the gay young lady presently wheeled round her palfrey and came to meet them. In doing this, her merry eye glanced again on the Condottieri, who had gone outside the gate and followed a few yards along the road; and as she did so, the confident Gascon, who still forgot they were *two*, and that the same looks might fall upon both, whispered to Sir Robert—

"Poor thing! poor thing! she is sorry to leave me, and will take another look!—only see how she gazes at me!"

As the back of the lady's cavalier and domestics were now towards him, whilst she faced him, the enterprising Gascon made a gallant sign to her with hand and lip. If this demonstration interested her at all, it certainly was not in her tender feelings, for her eye glanced more playfully than before, her lip curved into something more than a smile, and again pulling her hood over her face, she was heard to laugh aloud. She had now turned her horse's head, and still laughing was riding by the side of the cavalier, who anon turned his head round to look back at the object or objects that occasioned her mirth.

"By Saint George! and they are mocking us," said Sir Robert, with all an Englishman's susceptibility to the ridiculous. "Let us

back to the city, since we have only come thus far to be laughed at!" And he went back to the gate through which they had just issued.

The Gascon had no notion that they could possibly be laughing at him, or that the Tuscan Damina, or any other, could feel otherwise than flattered by his attentions; but he went after his comrade, whose more constrained demeanour, or less fashionable jerkin and cap and feather, he made amenable to the beautiful stranger's criticism or mockery. When he had strode up to the gate where Sir Robert was now standing, he turned to honour the travellers with another look, but they were gone. They had taken a path to the right of the high road, and could no more be seen.

"Prithee, gentle Florentine!" he then inquired of an old man who was standing there, "who is that fair lady who rides forth so well accompanied? Is that her husband?—is she not a Florentine?—and is it many leagues off that she abideth?—and is she rich?—and is she——"

"Allegre!" said Sir Robert to his inquisitive companion; "thou confoundest our formal old friend by the multiplicity of thy questions;" and then he addressed the old man, and asked who the lady was that had just gone out by that gate.

"Great warriors!" replied the old Florentine, in a tone of natural politeness that was already becoming common among the people, and with a degree of formality, almost of pedantry, which later centuries have so much increased, that in speaking to the meanest man in Florence, you may now-a-days expect to hear him reply by syllogisms;—"Great warriors! that fair lady who rideth forth so well accompanied has no husband; she is no Florentine; the distance of her father's castle is precisely four leagues and three-quarters from Florence; and she would be rich even if her father had twelve other daughters and as many sons; and of the latter he has only one——"

"The spark who rides by her bridle-rein," said l'Allegre, interrupting him. "I told thee, Sir Robert, he was her brother!"

"The same," continued the old Florentine, noways disturbed

by the Frenchman's petulance and interruption ; " and of female progeny the Lord of Roccadura has but she, the gay young Giuliva."

" A pretty name !" said the Gascon ; " and pray, who is the Lord of Roccadura, and where are his domains ?"

" The Lord of Roccadura !" said the old gossip. " By my faith ! bold Condottiero, and there be some in Florence who could tell you to their cost what the Signior of Roccadura is ! In spite of his gentle, laughing daughter you have seen here just now, and of his son, who is a well-disposed youth, and fonder of a ball and fête than a battle, old Roccadura is as fierce a Ghibelline lord as ever quarrelled with the Republic of Florence ! By San Lorenzo ! it was he who once fried half-a-dozen of his Guelf prisoners on a gridiron, and who, another time, leaguings with all the great Ghibelline lords in the Apennines, ravaged all the territory round our city, even as far as the hill of Fiesole, and was very near surprising Florence herself, where he threatened to hang the priors of all the arts with shreds of their own articles or manufactures ; and to drown half the rich, trading burghers who insulted the nobility or the land by their wealth and upstart pride. Ay ! to drown them in the Arno, with their bales of merchandise about their necks !"

" Whew !" said the Condottiero ; " this is a terrible man indeed ! But how—where is Roccadura ?"

" It is in the upper valley of the Arno : or, I should say more correctly, in the valley through which the brown Arno scatters the treasures of her waters to the occident, and where the said valley contracts ; and precisely four leagues and three-quarters from this gate of Florence, there rises the steep and lofty mountain of Roccadura ; and on that mountain, looking down into the said valley, there stands the baronial castle of the same name ; and, by my faith ! many in Florence wish it farther off !" said the precise old man.

" But if the Lord of Roccadura be so hated or feared, why come his children thus to the city ?" inquired Sir Robert.

" Oh, noble sirs ! the Republic hath now peace with the

Ghibelline nobles, one and all," said the old Florentine; "but God knows how long it may last!"

The Condottieri having obtained the information they wished, walked into Florence, l'Allegre still dwelling with undisturbed vanity on the attention he had attracted from the young Tuscan lady; and Sir Robert, without any of his confidence, treasuring the recollection of her beautiful face and eyes, and sighing to see them again.

Weeks and months, however, passed away; and many and many a walk and lounge was taken through the now familiar scenes of Florence's wealth and luxury, without offering again to the observation that "cunning piece of workmanship," the lady Giuliva, with her laughing eyes and elastic step; and many a time and oft did a fair, light maiden vault to her palfrey's back by Florence's old gate, without showing the identical grace, or the bewitching face of the fierce Lord of Roccadura's gentle daughter.

In this interval, l'Allegre had made so many conquests of a like nature, which, however, be it said, nearly all ended in a like manner, in a saucy glance of the eye and a farewell laugh, that the recollection of the fair Ghibelline was almost effaced, when one morning Sir Robert, whose memory had been more retentive, informed him that the Florentine Republic had at length come to a determination, now that her power was so augmented, to subdue for ever all the troublesome Ghibelline nobles in her neighbourhood, and that she was forthwith to commence operations by sending a powerful body of the Condottieri in her pay against the castle of Roccadura.

"Felicitate me, my friend Sir Robert!" said the Gascon, after a moment's reflection,—"*felicitate me*, for my fortune is made!"

"In what manner?" inquired the Englishman.

"Dost not recollect the young Ghibelline who was so struck with me?"

Sir Robert might indeed say he did; for, though void of presumption, or even of hope, that image, as we have intimated, had never quitted his mind and heart.

"Well, then," continued l'Allegre confidently, "she will doubly make my fortune! The Castle of Roccadura, as strong, they tell me, as any in Tuscany—nay, in Italy, would set arms at defiance—but love shall open its gates. The Republic, that shall thus triumph through me, will reward and honour me; and in the second place, the lady Giuliva shall be my wife; and I will allow the old baron, who is so fond of frying and drowning, five hundred crowns a year out of his own rent-roll, to keep himself and son. Thou seest I will be generous, good Sir Robert!"

"I do every justice to the generosity of thy intentions," said the English knight; "but I confess I cannot so readily conceive how thou art to make thyself master of the Castle of Roccadura, or——"

"A song—a song by moonlight, and the sight of my person, will do the business—the fair Ghibelline will give ingress to me, and I will give ingress to the gay Condottieri. Dost see now, thou slow Englander!"

"I do!" replied Sir Robert, wondering at his companion's confidence; and then he added in a friendly feeling for his safety—for, in spite of the Gascon's foibles, he was a brave and a good fellow in the main, and the Englishman was really attached to him—"But bethink thee, l'Allegre, of the danger of a failure in such an enterprise—the pretty black-eyed girl that might have liked thee well enough to smile on thee from the threshold of a jeweller's shop in Florence, may not like thee quite enough to give thee secret admittance to her father's castle; and then——"

"Leave that to me! leave that to me!" interrupted l'Allegre; "if I have any knowledge in looks, those the young Ghibelline cast at me that day insure me success!"

Sir Robert, so modest was he, did not even think it hard that his companion should admit him to no participation in those gay looks of the Lady of Roccadura:—he only said, still in friendly regard to the Gascon's safety—

"But shouldst thou be surprised in the castle, and so admitted, and on such an errand, what fate canst thou expect? Thou hast heard the savage character of the old Ghibelline lord!"

"Nor have I any reason to doubt the correctness of all we have

heard of his cruelty, nor can I pretend not to make myself amenable to his vengeance, should I be detected in my work ; but the stake is worth the hazard of the game : thou hast not known terror often deter me, Sir Robert ; and though I should like an opener and more straightforward field of operation, as there can be no such, and nothing but a *ruse de guerre* can ever take that eagle's nest of a fortress, why I *will* take it by a fine story and a song. Ay ! I will do and dare all I proposed—so, say no more touching the matter, my loyal friend and true, an thou hopest to empty a bumper at my marriage.”

As the success of the Florentines depended a good deal on the rapidity and secrecy of their movements, the Republic had no sooner decided on the measure of putting down the Ghibelline nobles (who had so often and so long harassed them, devastating the country, interrupting the commercial communications of the high-roads, and retiring to their strongholds and fastnesses on the mountains, whence they derided the industrious burghers), than they enrolled the greatest force they could obtain at the moment, and giving the command to the favourite Condottiero of the day, the English knight, desired him to hold himself in readiness to march at an hour's notice.

In the time that had elapsed since the convivial halt on Monte San Giuliano, with which this tale opened, many of the Condottieri, who had gone on other services to Milan and Venice, had again changed masters, some of them having been attracted to Florence by the fame of Sir Robert's success and the high consideration he enjoyed from the wealthy Republic. With these bold lances (for they could be bold when it suited them) the English knight was already well acquainted, and he possessed every influence ; though the same could hardly be said of a swarm of Catalans, Provençals, Germans, Italians, and nondescripts, who, under different Condottieri captains, now prepared to march in the service of Florence under his command.

When the secret orders came to march, and l'Allegre saw the fickle mercenaries mounting their horses, and the engines of attack, which supplied the place of artillery, drawn out to rumble in their

rear, he could not repress a smile of contempt, and an observation to Sir Robert, that it was not by such means as those he would ever make himself master of Roccadura. And from what Sir Robert had heard of that castle, he was obliged to acquiesce, though the orders of the Republic were peremptory, and he must make an attempt on it ere he turned to others, which would be comparatively easy prey.

To avoid as much as possible attracting attention by these military preparations, the Condottieri were marched out through different gates of the city, in small troops at a time, with instructions, that after they had manœuvred round different parts of the town, they should concentrate in the upper valley of the Arno, towards sunset.

It was on a luxurious summer evening that, troop after troop, these Condottieri, clad in shining armour, and with their long lances resting on the stirrup iron, and little banderoles floating from their bright steel heads, arrived in the peaceful valley of Italy's most classic river ; and after having been hastily passed in review by the gallant English knight, rode after him and l'Allegre, who at the near approach of the trial he had determined to make, and that Sir Robert had sanctioned, was more confident and sanguine than ever,

The sun had sunk behind the mountains before the inspiring word of command "march" was given ; and as they advanced up the valley, they soon became engaged in the deep blue and purple shades of evening. The bold rocks by the side of their road, or near at hand, retained the lingering of a greyish yet a warm light ; the shelving hills with the olive groves, gardens and orchards on their sides, were coloured with a hazy blue, only here and there a white-faced cottage retaining light, or a loftier and rarer monastery on those hills' summits—the depth of the valley was covered with a mysterious-looking vapour, as with a veil, through which the winding Arno, still tinted with the golden hues of the departed luminary, and here and there a farm house, betrayed by its wreath of smoke, circling through the dilating vapour, were the only objects distinctly visible. At the head of the valley, or what seemed thence its termination, a sublime mass of mountain, with a golden, glorious

atmosphere between it, and the nearer deep blue hills, still glowed with the departing radiance of an Italian sun, like the throne of a divinity who had but now vacated it, and left behind him half of his glorius reflex. As, however, the Condottieri went along the Val d'Arno, in deep silence, and in perfect ignorance, save a captain or two, as to whither they were going, the radiance on the highest mountain's top died rapidly away; a deep purple followed the hues of crimson and gold and saffron, and the purple was succeeded by a greater depth of shade, whose colour could not be defined; whilst in the vale below, the river and the curling smoke of the farm-houses disappeared, and on the hills, the cottages, and the monasteries. The valley moreover contracting, and the hills and mountains becoming much loftier, the warriors soon rode on in disagreeable darkness. They had been for some time gradually ascending from the bed of the river, up the mountain's sides, when about three hours after the commencement of the march, they halted on a sort of table-land, where they were illumined and cheered by the risen moon. Whilst the troops were busied in attending to their horses, that had been well breathed by their climb, Sir Robert and l'Allegre, and a subtle Florentine peasant, who had served them as guide, advanced to the edge of this natural esplanade, and fixed their eyes on the dark walls of an old castle, that seemed about as many roods above their heads, over which it rose, almost perpendicularly, as was the Arno beneath their feet.

"There's Roccadura! and by my sword! a hard rock it is!" said Sir Robert.

"And now, my gallant comrade, and sometime commander, we must leave our horses here and climb silently up the mount's side through the ilex woods and the thick bushes, among which you will all lie in ambush, until I make you a signal from the old Ghibelline's castle!" said l'Allegre, without any diminution of confidence.

"The only approach we may hope to make without being perceived," said the guide, "is indeed in that mode and in this direction; for if we continue our way on horseback, and wind round and round the conical mount in our ascent, we may be discovered



a hundred times, though it is near midnight, and all so seem so fast asleep in Roccadura !”

“Such an approach is not to be thought of ! Brave Sir Robert, do order on the troops to follow us ! I am impatient to prove to thee that I can command success in this important enterprise ! I burn to clasp the lovely Ghibelline in my arms !” said the impetuous Gascon.

The English knight, then going back to the Condottieri, pointed to the fortress above their heads, and told them for the first time the object of their secret expedition.

At the sight of Roccadura's situation, on the peak of a break-neck mountain, that seemed to rise on every side almost like a wall, the boldest among them shook their heads, and some, as would oftentimes happen in these voluntary combinations of mercenaries, refused to have anything to do in so ridiculous an enterprise. But when the Gascon expounded to them that the place was to be taken by a *ruse*, and not by force, they picketed their horses at the foot of the mount, and leaving a few soldiers to take care of them and secure their retreat, they followed the English knight and the sanguine l'Allegre, who climbed through the ilex wood with astonishing activity.

After proceeding for some time through the wood, the party came to the road which wound spirally round the mount. They crossed the road, and again entered among the thick trees, that terminated at the point where they again came upon the winding steep road. But beyond the road and the line where the ilex trees ended, the mount's sides were covered with thick bushes sufficiently high to mask the warriors' approach ; and they continued their way together through them, till the road, which ran in closer diagonals as the cone contracted, was again before them. As they cast their eyes forward they perceived that even the hardy vegetation through which they had been scrambling ceased a little beyond this part of the road, and that all the rest of the mountain was bare rock, with patches here and there of dark moss.

“My brave Sir Robert and his merry men all,” said the confident Gascon, “will even halt here, where the bushes will conceal them

until I make sure of one of the castle's portals. When I wave a torch or a lamp three times from those black walls, then will be the time to rush to my aid. The distance now is nothing !”

“But yet, l'Allegre, before thou quittest me,” said the English knight, “reflect once more on the perils of thy enterprise. There ! do not frown. I know thou art brave, but yon baron is a cruel man, and the death thou mayest meet at his hands is not such as a warrior would suffer, and——”

“Prithee, most considerate friend, say no more ! I am resolved, and confident of success. But even should I fail,—should the Ghibelline maiden scorn my music and my love, why then I shall not enter the castle walls, but be at liberty to scamper down the hill's side and rejoin thee here. But the glances from the threshold of the jeweller's shop, and the lingering eyes by the Florentine gate, make me sure of my game. When thou next seest me, Sir Robert, thou shalt felicitate me on the audacity of my love. 'Tis the southern tower, thou sayest, that the baron's daughter dwelleth in ?”

“The same,” replied the peasant guide ; “and see ! by the Madonna, a light this moment glimmers from her lattice,—she will be for bed.”

While the peasant spoke, a rude clock in the castle sounded, in Italian time, four hours of the night, which at that season of the year was about midnight, and a faint light indeed gleamed in the southern tower of Roccadura.

“That taper's light is the harbinger of my happiness !” said the Gascon ; “it leads me to love and beauty !” And hanging a guitar round his neck,—the unwarlike instrument with which he was to take a fortress,—he bounded up the hill's side, with a heart as light as a gay tone of music.

When Sir Robert saw him thus approaching the castle, and the home of her whose exquisite black eyes and youthful happy face time had no power to obliterate, a new and a jealous feeling gained the mastery of his naturally modest, generous mind ; and dreading now, not the danger and loss of his friend, he felt an exquisite apprehension that he would succeed ;—and he felt, too, that *le*

could not see without anguish l'Allegre's success. He almost regretted he had not undertaken the project himself ; for, after all, they were two, when they met the fair Ghibelline in Florence ; and if she smiled, it might as well have been on him as on his more confident companion. The hearty laugh with which she returned the Gascon's salutation, when on her road from Florence, certainly did not betoken she was much in love with *him* at the time. But his growing and too late regret that he himself had not volunteered to gain an entrance for his employers, the republicans of Florence, into the old noble's castle, through his daughter's heart, was stopped by an influx of chivalrous feeling, which all his experience as a Condottiero and a mercenary could not extinguish entirely, and which now made him blush at such an attempt as ungenerous, dishonourable, treacherous—every way unworthy of an English knight. Still however he felt uneasy, unhappy ; and it was only a return of the conviction that l'Allegre would fail—that he had miscalculated his influence on the fair Ghibelline, which gave him comfort.

But as he presently saw matters going on over his head, and under the castle's walls, there seemed every appearance that the adventurous l'Allegre would *not* fail.

On quitting his comrades, the Gascon strode up rapidly to the old fortress, which did anything rather than smile a welcome ; and he took his post at the foot of the southern tower, from which the light still gleamed. As soon as he had ascertained with his quick eye that no one was on guard, or moving on that side of the castle, he tuned his little guitar ; and after a beautiful prelude, for the Condottiero had become an accomplished musician, he sang in his very best manner the most touching song he could remember, which was something like the following :—

“ What pang is this, so keen, so deep ?  
Art thou that love I ne'er have known ?—  
If love thou art, still silent sleep,  
And in my heart expire alone !

“ Thy birth, alas ! I had no power  
To smother in this aching breast ;—  
But lone, and hidden, there expire,  
Untold, unknown, unpitied, rest.”

As the songster finished, the little light still beamed through the black walls ; but no casement opened—nothing showed that the amorous melody was heeded.

“Is she asleep? is she deaf?” thought the impatient Gascon ; “but I will try a higher key ; and if she resists such singing as this—why she has no heart in her :” and he recommenced his ditty.

He had come to its modest, melancholy close, and was singing “untold, unknown, unpitied, rest,” which he was giving with all his pathos, when a slight noise was heard overhead, and a beautiful young face lit by the moon, which now rode in her glory opposite to the old tower, peered from the opened lattice.

“The bait hath taken,” chuckled the Gascon joyfully ; “and now for a speech as touching as my song !”

“Who is that throweth away such choice music on the mountain’s top, and at such an hour as this ?” said a silvery playful voice. “Methinks for a silent, uncomplaining lover, as his song would give him to be, he singeth somewhat lustily ?”

“Lady !” replied the Gascon, in a passionate tone, and with theatrical gestures to suit ; “oh, lady ! fairer and brighter than the moon that discloses thy peerless charms to thine adorer, I am he, the Condottiero of Florence, who months ago was blessed with the glances of thy dark eyes, when thou camest—a brighter jewel than any he could sell—from the old jeweller’s shop in the street of the goldsmiths ; and who never—no, never since that moment,—(the impudent, lying rogue, had made love to twenty, maids, wives, or widows, of all degrees, *ben contate*, since then !)—never hath ceased to think of thee, and to sigh for the moment when he might see those dear eyes again, and hear thee speak, as now he doth !”

“Didst buy that speech, Messer Condottiero, with thy song ?” said the lady of Roccadura, “or is it the sentiment of thy heart ?”

“Of my heart of hearts, fair lady !” replied the Gascon ; “but prithee let me in thy bower—allow me nearer approach, that at thy feet I may pour out my adoration—my love !”

"Methinks one of thy calling, and in the service that thou art, would not be welcome in my father's castle," said the lady.

"Thy father need not know love's visit," said l'Allegre: "are not all asleep in the Castle?"

"All fast asleep!" replied Giuliva.

"Then, oh beautiful lady! give me but the end of a little cord, and I will climb those walls, and be in at thy window in a moment!"

"They say mystery adds to love's sweetness!" said the young Ghibelline, after a pause of a few moments.

"By Saint Denis! an apt scholar! she pants to receive me in her arms!" thought l'Allegre; and then addressing her, he added—

"Of a certainty it doth, most lovely, loving maiden; but the night wears on, and I am dying to kiss that lily hand!—only lower me a cord—a little coil of rope, and I——"

"But alas! I have no rope," said Giuliva.

"Then knot the silken curtains of thy bed—they will be long enough to reach me—and strong enough, if they be woven in Florence."

"Long enough they are, and strong," replied the lady; "but dost think me Hercules' daughter, to suppose that I should be strong enough to pull up a portly warrior, in a heavy iron jacket, like thee, as I should a bucket from a well?"

"Thou hast but to make thine end fast to the frame of thy lattice, and that will do without thy labour, sweet lady! but an thou love me, make haste, for my heart is beating as loudly as that old bell that just told me it was midnight!"

"Thou hast too humble a sense of thy merits," said Giuliva, after another pause: "and how canst thou doubt of the love of one who can even contemplate so bold and so naughty an exploit! Why, what dost think the fair dames of Florence would say if they heard of a baron's daughter smuggling a lover into her father's castle at the dead of night in this guise, by dangling him at her bed-curtains—oh, shocking!"

"All is permitted to love—to young and passionate love!"

said the Gascon; "and from the moment that I have sighed my soul at thy feet, I will never cease to love thee!"

"Ay! thou wilt swear as much as that? Wilt swear, that when I have been so naughty, thou wilt not do, as 'tis said men are wont to do—wilt never cease to love me!"

"Lady, I do swear it!" said the Gascon, taking in vain the names of several very respectable saints.

"Well, then, wait thee awhile, and I will go prepare love's ladder!" And Giuliva quitted the window, and went into her room.

"By all my past successes, and I have not been a backward or unlucky lover," mused the delighted l'Allegre, when she was gone. "I could scarcely have expected to carry this choice fortress so soon—with the first—the very first coup-de-main! And so young—and ought to be so innocent—and so lofty of lineage, and hitherto so pure of fame! By my stars! I am wonder-struck! but there is no telling to what lengths woman will go for love. I shall make yon starch Englishman's heart burst with envy when I show him all my triumph."

He was left to these musings for some time. The Lady Giuliva returned not to the window. He walked impatiently up and down, and at last began to reproach himself for having made too sure of his conquest, to despair of her return, and even to fear some surprise from the castle. He drew his sword, and retreated some distance from the castle walls, to the declivity of the mount whence his retreat was free to his comrades. But at this moment the fair Ghibelline came to the casement loaded with the thick silk curtains of her bed, which she had tied together with great skill.

"What art doing there, Messer Condottiero?" said she in a tone of alarm, "with that naughty sword?—put it up, put it up—the sight likes me not!" and then she added in her most playful manner, "Wouldst carve the moon with it, or kill all those little lizards that are creeping along in moonshine?"

"Beautiful idol of my heart!" said l'Allegre, sheathing his heavy broad-sword, "I was only exercising my arm to still my heart so impatient at thy absence! But thou art here at last: throw down the silk, and in a moment I will be at thy dear feet!"

Giuliva, who had secured the end of the curtains, threw them down. Their united lengths nearly reached the ground ; and the Gascon, with a reasonable enough inquiry (considering he was to trust his neck to them), as to whether she had tied them tight, caught hold of them, and placing his feet in the interstices of the rough old wall, began his adventurous ascent.

When Sir Robert, who had been watching from the bushes below, and for some time smiling over the idea that the Gascon would be disappointed and return crest-fallen, saw him thus triumphantly climbing up to the lady's bower, where she stood expecting him, and evidently encouraging him in his somewhat difficult labour, he almost gnashed his teeth with spite—he could not help saying aloud, “Oh woman, woman ! who shall depend on thee, when one so young and noble does deeds like these ! resigning her honour, and perilling even her father's life, for a stranger—a saucy-faced gallant like *l'Allegre* !”

But the happy Gascon, the while, had gained the high lattice—had leaped into her chamber, and was now at the Lady Giuliva's feet, delivering the very best love-speech he had ever made.

“Thank heaven ! I have thee safe ! But prithee rise, most gallant sir, who risketh neck and limb for an undeserving lady, as though there were no such thing as breaking them—there, rise ! such an attitude becomes not so irresistible a lover as thou art—and, for the Madonna's sake ! speak thy tender speech less loudly, and make less noise in kissing my hand !” said the fair Giuliva, who almost laughed as she spoke.

*L'Allegre* rose, and would have embraced his easily won mistress ; but Giuliva, with the activity of a fairy, escaped him, and going to the chamber door, whispered—“Not here ! not here ! Messer !—my nurse might wake and intrude. Up these stairs I have a more convenient trysting-place—a bower for love, where no feet ever enter save mine !” And she playfully beckoned to *l'Allegre*, who hastily followed her on tip-toe.

Keeping always far in advance of him, and gliding with ease and speed over the rough stone steps of a dark staircase, whilst her ardent swain, less familiar with its mysteries, bruised his shins

at almost every step he took, she stopped at last before a low door.

The moonlight entered here from the head of the staircase, which terminated a little higher up under the battlements of the tower ; and as the lady threw open the door, he saw a low narrow room that might be secret enough, but was by no means so comfortable as the apartment they had quitted. Giuliva stood on the threshold and again beckoned with her pretty little hand. With eagerness he rushed to the door, and entered with her.

"Let me listen that all is still !" said his fair conductress, again evading his embrace, and gliding back to the door—which the next instant she closed upon him with a clap like thunder—a startling music which the astounded Condottiero heard the next instant, and before he could reach the door, followed by the still more alarming sounds of bolts and bars clattering without.

"Ah ! what means this ? gentle lady, dost sport with me ? or am I, curses on my folly ! indeed caught as in a trap ?" cried he.

A most hearty peal of laughter was for some time his only reply ; and then the fair Giuliva, putting her provoking face to an iron grated, narrow window, by the side of the well-secured door, addressed him in this consolatory language :—

"Ay, caught ! caught in the trap of thine own egregious vanity ! A prisoner in the castle that no doubt thou countest on betraying to thy masters, the dirty Florentine burghers !"

"Nay, lady fair ! thou canst not mean what thou sayest ! it was love for thee that brought me hither, and made me peril limbs and life, and——"

"Art thou wont to carry an army with thee, when thou goest a wooing ? and was it to witness thy love for me that those steel-clad soldiers that are hidden there in the bushes like robbers as they are, came all the way from Florence to Roccadura ? Liar that thou art ! As I looked out at my window on the fair moon, ere I should go to bed, I saw thy bands steal across the road and hide themselves in the bushes ; it is not now I had to learn the hatred of the Republicans to my noble Sire, and the infamous treachery to which they can resort against their superiors. I watched thy



approach, and though I could not have conceived thy presumptuous plan, I no sooner saw thy mode of attack, than I at once understood its object, and made a plan of mine own. Vain, confident idiot that thou art ! to be thus entrapped by a girl like me."

"A thousand curses on thy treachery !" cried l'Allegre, who now beat his forehead and walked up and down the cell, in a state little short of madness.

"Who talks of treachery ?" continued the Lady Giuliva, "doth it become thee, thou false loon and no knight ! thou who countedst on my dishonour, and by my love to betray my father, my brother, the fortress of my ancestors, that no foe could ever take ? Oh fool ! fool ! and could thy matchless vanity so blind thee, couldst thou really flatter thyself with such success, and such infamy on my part for love of thee, a stranger, an adventurer, a hired cut-throat in the pay of the plebeian Florentines ? ay, blush and hide thy recreant head !"

"Thou falser one than Dalilah," said the exquisitely mortified Condottiero, "did not thine eyes dwell on me with admiration in the streets of Florence, and——"

"On thee, thou ineffable coxcomb !" interrupted the lady ; "in sooth, I would not have looked twice on so swart and ill-favoured and swaggering a lout ! No ! I looked, and I will say it, with pleasure on thy blue-eyed, fair-haired, and modest comrade ! I laughed in contempt at thy forwardness and insolence. I admired *his* different demeanour as much as I did his superior person : and if it be any consolation for thee to know it, I tell thee that I felt a joy in my heart when I discovered that it was not he I entrapped and secured for my father's vengeance, but thou ! I tell thee, I would see *him* again, see him in goodwill and friendliness, with as much pleasure as I shall see thee hanged like a dog from my ancestral turrets. I could have broken thy stupid neck when thou wast dangling in the air under my window : but I preferred giving thee into the hands of my father, who will treat with thee to-morrow morn, for I will not now disturb his rest for a paltry wretch like thee !"

"I had better face the foul fiend himself than this fierce Baron

of Roccadura," thought l'Allegre: "he will be for grilling me on his gridiron, as he did the Florentines;" and then addressing the lady in the most dejected tone, he supplicated she would not be so cruel.

"And what fate was my father, my brother, to expect from thee and thine and the treacherous Florentines?" replied Giuliva. "But good night! I wish thee joy of thy trysting-place, and a good sleep on the stony pavement of love's bower, and pleasant dreams! Again, good night!"

She began to descend the steps, but presently returned, laughing most heartily, and again spoke to her furious, mortified prisoner.

"Thou wilt remember thine oath, thou wilt never cease to love me, never! never!" said she; and renewing her laughter, she then ran down the dark staircase, regained her chamber, and placed herself at the lattice to see what the ambushed warriors might do.

For half an hour, for an hour, Sir Robert and the rest of the Condottieri waited with tolerable patience, only looking up now and then from the bushes at the old castle, where the light continued to glimmer from the southern tower, but then they began to be a-weary.

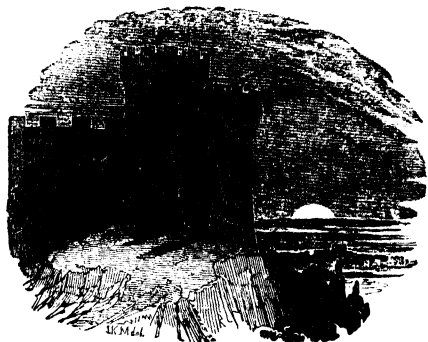
"By Saint Anthony, who loved a pig!" said one of the soldiers, who all perfectly understood the manœuvres abovehead, and the scaling of the wall by l'Allegre, and to what it was to lead, "by Saint Anthony! and methinks our captain there spends too much time, making love to the Italian!"

"Ay! it may be all pleasant enough to him; but curse me if 'tis very agreeable to us to be crouching here, holding a candle to his amours by the light of the moon!" said another; "he ought to have opened a postern-gate to us ere this!"

"In good truth the adventurous Gascon doth somewhat tarry!" said one of the superior officers, addressing the English knight.

Sir Robert thought so too; but an apprehension he now began to feel, that his friend had not only not met the success he counted on, but might be in jeopardy, was certainly rendered less acute and painful to him, by his inward satisfaction that l'Allegre should

have been defeated in an enterprise that would have thwarted his own happiness—his love ; for, from the moment the Gascon had entered the Lady Giuliva's bower, the violence of his feelings did not permit him to doubt that they really originated in love. He had however his duty to perform as commander of the expedition. He said something to give patience to his troops, and let another irksome half-hour pass away. At the expiration of that time it was no longer possible to restrain the impatient Condottieri, and he was obliged to consent to some two or three of them approaching nearer to the old fortress, to see, if they could, what had become of l'Allegre, and what was passing therein.



The lady, who was keeping her lonely watch, saw these fellows climb up the hill and crouch under the old walls. She then opened her lattice and addressed them.

“Go back, cowardly varlets !” said she ; “your treacherous captain has been entrapped by me, and is now my prisoner in a dungeon, from which you have no power to save him. Go back ! and tell your lurking comrades there that the Lady Giuliva, in the name of her father the Baron of Roccadura, scorns their arts and defies their arms.”

The Condottieri, as if panic struck by what had befallen one of their favourite leaders, and by the manner and tone of a woman, ran down the mountain's side to do her bidding ; and on their de-

parture, Giuliva went and roused her father and brother, and informed them of all that had happened. Their admiration at her presence of mind and skill was only equalled by their wrath against the presumptuous l'Allegre, whom they would have put to death at once, if it had not been for her representations. But return we to the Condottieri.

No sooner had Sir Robert received the half-expected intelligence, than to do his duty by his employers, or to have the appearance of doing it, and all that could be done against Roccadura, whose position he found quite as strong as it had been reported to be, he despatched the mass of his men to bring the heavy besieging engines up the mountain by the road, whilst he prepared to secure with the rest the upper part of the mount under the castle walls.

Before the battering-rams and other heavy and awkward machines could be brought up the steep road, which in many places was no road at all, but an abraded water-course, through which, in the rainy season of the year, the mountain torrents descended impetuously towards the Val d'Arno, the day began to dawn, and the sun had risen over the Eastern Apennines and illuminated all the romantic scene, as Sir Robert drew out his hostile array before the old castle, which was summoned by a herald to surrender to the Florentine Republic.

Within the frowning old castle everything had remained in perfect stillness until that summons, only a few men being seen now and then peeping over the battlements at the Condottieri; but as the herald finished his last flourish, the fierce old Baron of Roccadura and his son, and a host of vassals in armour, appeared at the summit of the southern tower, with the captive Gascon, bound hand and foot, and trembling in the midst of them.

This was an interesting moment, and the fierce Ghibelline's speech deserved the silence it met with. The speech was very short.

"This is my answer," said he, pointing to l'Allegre, who felt an uneasy sensation about his neck as the Baron spoke: "I will hang this villain of yours from the top of this tower if you do not

instantly break up from Roccadura and return to your tradesmen of Florence !”

Sir Robert, as commander of the expedition, found himself in a very awkward dilemma. After some minutes of reflection, he advanced in front of his men, and said aloud—

“Think what thou dost, my Lord of Roccadura ! Such a deed will bring down death on the head of thee and all of thine, when we storm thy castle !”

“Storm Roccadura !” replied the Baron, with a laugh, “when thou dost, ’tis well ! But thou canst force no entrance here, and thou knowest it :—for see ! the rock round my castle walls scarcely allows thee breadth enough to place thy stupid engines—thou never canst work them where they are !”

Now all this was perfectly true. Indeed Sir Robert saw his instruments of attack, many of which he had not been able to get up the mountain at all, so badly placed that they seemed every moment on the point of making a precipitous retreat down the steep and slippery rocks. He could not, however, give up the business at once ; and he added to the Ghibelline—

“Then will I beleaguer thee, until famine forces thee to surrender ; and then, if thou hurtest but a hair of my fellow-soldier’s head, I will hang thee from the battlements where thou standest !”

Another loud laugh, which was echoed by all those on the southern tower, except l’Allegre, who, perhaps for the first time in his life, was in a very serious mood, was for some moments the only answer the Condottieri received. Then the Baron said—

“The magazines of my castle could furnish daily, and for a whole year at least, a hundred such repasts as are eaten by any one of thy parsimonious burghers of Florence ! Wouldst pitch thy tent a year on this mountain-top ?—But, by Heaven ! thou shalt not hinder our egress a day—another hour ! Nay ! an’ thou departest not forthwith, with thy hungry ruffians at thy heels, I will do something worse than hanging to this window-scaler !”

“Sir Robert ! my dear friend Sir Robert !” exclaimed the Gascon, “he will most assuredly do me on his gridiron if thou dost not

beat a retreat, which I intreat thee to do, for the devil is in this castle, and in every one about it,—and if thou stayest, and I am roasted to a cinder, Roccadura will never be taken !”

“Well !” said Sir Robert, “if the Baron will restore thee, my gallant comrade, to liberty, we will forthwith carry our arms elsewhere.”

“’Tis not for thee to make, but to receive conditions,” replied the old Ghibelline, “and I have the intention of retaining my captive for another occasion : I will hang him, or, as I said before, do worse by him an’ thou departest not.”

“A dungeon is better than death,” cried l’Allegre : “better times will come for a man of my merits ; but prithee, Sir Robert, by the love thou bearest me, break up hence ! Think of the gridiron, dear Sir Robert !”

“We will not have our gay captain sacrificed !” exclaimed many of the Condottieri. “Let us depart !”

Sir Robert felt nothing was to be done but this, and making something like a stipulation with the fierce Baron, that he would at least treat his prisoner leniently until such times as his ransom might be procured, or peace made with the Florentine Republic, he gave the word of command, which was speedily obeyed by the troops, who began to lower their battering and other engines down the mountain or to betake themselves to the road.

The English knight took a kind farewell of the Gascon, and was turning away from the castle, when the Lady Giuliva, who had been for some time watching him from among the crowd on the tower, stayed his steps by saying—

“I will be thy guarantee, thou tender-hearted knight ! that thy comrade here, rogue as he is, be well treated. Ay ! he shall keep his guitar with him, and sing away in his cell here like a black-bird in its cage, and as many love-songs as he chooses : though maugre he hath sworn to love me ever, I cannot promise to listen to them.”

At the sounds of that silvery, playful voice, Sir Robert looked up : the lady had advanced to the edge of the battlements of the tower, and he saw again that lovely, youthful face, and those

peculiar eyes which had so fascinated him, though they had given him none of the confidence of l'Allegre. He stood for some time riveted to the spot : every other object on earth disappeared from his eyes,—every other thought, every feeling of mortification at his want of success in the expedition entrusted to him, absented itself from his mind ; and he only gazed, and loved, and fancied, that could he but see the lady once, only once a day, even at as great a distance as now he saw her, he would prefer l'Allegre's captivity to his own liberty. For some time he could not reply to Giuliva's speech, which, though mocking to the Gascon, was meant in kindness to his handsomer friend, and expressed her real intention to procure lenient treatment for the prisoner *she* had made. Even when Sir Robert did speak, his words were confused, and contained no intelligible sentiment, save that mercy became the fair, and that his arm should ever be at the service of the gentle, generous being who would extend it to his comrade. With a modest salutation and a last look, that though he was perhaps unconscious of its eloquence, spoke more than words to the young Ghibelline's heart, he then followed his men, but frequently, and even after everybody had disappeared from the walls, he turned his head as he descended the mountain, towards the Castle of Roccadura, which he had not only failed in taking, but had left his heart as much a prisoner in it, as was his comrade's person.

Sir Robert's failure in this difficult undertaking did not injure his reputation, nor prevent the Florentines from immediately employing him again. He was met in the Val d'Arno by a commissary of the Republic and a reinforcement of several fresh lances of Condottieri, with orders to march at once against another Ghibelline castle of somewhat easier access than Roccadura. In this second enterprise he was fortunate, nor did his fortune abandon him, until one after the other, all the castles of the nobles on the Apennines, that overlooked and awed the dominions of the Florentine Republic, were subdued.

Left almost to himself, with the wily burghers of Florence preventing the sale of the produce of his estates, and finally even his descent from the castle or the mountain-top, the old Ghibelline

Roccadura, who still held l'Allegre prisoner, was inclined to treat, and to be somewhat more courteous in his parleys than he had been on a former occasion. It was but fitting that he who had performed the rest of the service, though he had been foiled in this, should have the honour of receiving the surrender of the last of the Ghibellines. The handsome English knight was therefore dispatched with the conditions of the Florentines; and as he comported himself in an amiable manner, and even procured more favourable terms than the old Baron could have expected, he was not only admitted into the castle, but received very shortly after as the suitor of the Lady Giuliva. The crest-fallen l'Allegre, who had been treated quite as mildly, and in every way, as the lady had promised, was liberated and sent to Florence with Sir Robert's dispatches, and the information that, with the kind permission of his employers, he should in a few days make the young Ghibelline his wife.





## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Sixteenth Century.

ITALY was now to be the scene of contests of greater magnitude than she had witnessed since the days of Charlemagne. The wars of one miniature state with another, the feuds of cities, the restless intrigues of all, were now to be lost in the contemplation of the wars and ambition of great potentates from beyond the Alps.

The Italians had thrown away their golden opportunity. They continued dissevered, while the great Ultramontane nations, gradually triumphing over the feudal system, which had kept them weak, consolidated their strength, effected a unity of government and purpose, and formed standing national armies, superior in number and in quality to those that had preceded.

If craft and cunning—if all the subtleties of politics—if a Machiavelism deep and remorseless, that was capable of all treachery, that hesitated at no crime, could have availed Italy, she had been saved. “But,” to use the impressive language of Mr. Hallam, “it is the will of Providence that the highest and surest wisdom, even in matters of policy, should never be unconnected with virtue.”\* And virtue had long been exiled from the councils of the Italians, who had become incapable of that high and sure wisdom.

Other circumstances, however, to which sufficient weight does not appear to be generally given, contributed to the rapid decline of Italy. One of her ingenious sons had discovered a New World, but this glory was dearly bought; for the precious metals, that almost immediately flowed thence into other countries, materially changed the economy of the times, and enriched those countries from sources Italy was a stranger to. Much of this gold and silver might have found its way to the marts of the commercial, enterprising Italians, but it happened, unfortunately for them, that the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered shortly after, and diverted the rich trade of the East from Italy, which monopolized trade, from the eleventh century and the time of the crusades, had poured a continuous stream of wealth into her lap. The Reformation stopped other currents at their fountain-head. The

\* Middle Ages, chap. iii. part. 2.

ecclesiastical revenues of a great part of Europe were at once subtracted from Rome, that thus lost a great portion of what we may term the "wealth of her superstition."

1500.—Alexander VI. succeeded in establishing his son Cæsar Borgia in the Duchy of Romagna. They obtained their object by a system of most atrocious and perfidious policy, the latter inveigling and murdering the principal feudal lords of the territory. Cæsar Borgia was supported in these aggressions by Louis XII. of France.

The Pope died two years later of poison, which he had destined for another, and his death involved the ruin of Cæsar Borgia, who terminated his flagitious life in a field of battle in Spain.

1501.—Louis XII. invaded Naples, and an iniquitous alliance was formed between him and Ferdinand of Arragon (who had engaged to defend Naples), for the partition of that kingdom. Frederic of Naples threw himself on the generosity of Louis, who assigned him the Duchy of Anjou. His eldest son was sent prisoner to Spain, and the Arragonese dynasty of Naples ceased to reign.

1502.—The French and Spaniards quarrelled over the spoil. The French were completely defeated at Cerignola and on the Garigliano.

1506.—Pope Julius II. annexed Bologna and Perugia to the Papal dominions.

1509.—Pisa was finally subjugated by the Florentines.

The celebrated league of Cambray having been formed by the Pope, the Emperor, and the Kings of France and Spain against Venice, that territory was invaded by Louis XII., who totally defeated the Venetian army at Aignadello. The Republic made peace with the Pope and the King of Spain, and the Emperor Maximilian was discomfited before Padua.

1511.—The Pope and the King of Spain made war on Louis, but were defeated at Ravenna by the gallant Gaston de Foix, who was killed in the battle. The Emperor Maximilian joined the League against the French, who were expelled from Italy; and Maximilian Sforza obtained possession of the Duchy of Milan.

Leo X. was elected Pope, and his family (the Medici) regained their supremacy at Florence.

1513.—The French were defeated at Novara by the Swiss.

1514.—Peace was concluded between Louis and the Pope.

1515.—The French again obtained possession of Milan.

1517.—The treaty of Noyon, between Francis I. and Charles King of Spain, and the pacification between the Emperor and Venice, gave general peace to Italy.

1521.—The Pope and the Emperor Charles V. confederated against the French and drove them from the Milanese.

Adrian VI. succeeded Leo, and within two years was succeeded by Clement VII., of the Medici family.

1524.—The French, after sustaining a variety of reverses in Lombardy, were completely beaten at Pavia, where Francis I. was made prisoner.

1526.—The Pope, Florence, and Venice confederated with Francis to drive the Emperor's forces from Italy, and replace Sforza in the Milanese.

1527.—Rome was sacked by the Imperialists, and the Pope made prisoner. The unfortunate city suffered every horror which the presence of a licentious soldiery, during ten months, can inflict.

1528.—Andrew Doria expelled the French from Genoa, and gave freedom to his native country.

1529.—General peace was established in Italy.

1530.—The Emperor was crowned by the Pope at Bologna, and established a complete ascendancy in Italy.

The Medici family, who had been expelled from Florence by the Republican party, on the taking of Rome, again endeavoured to regain their authority there. They were assisted by the Imperial forces; and Florence, after a gallant resistance, was obliged to capitulate. The capitulation was shamefully violated, and Alessandro de' Medici was declared the first Duke of Florence, and the Republic finally suppressed.

1535.—Francis I. renewed hostilities, and claimed Milan on the death of Sforza, but the peace of Crespi left the political state of Italy again under the entire control of the Emperor.

1545.—Parma and Placentia erected into a sovereign Duchy by Pope Paul III., in favour of his natural son Pietro Luigi Farnese.

1555.—Pope Paul IV. allied himself with Henry II. of France, against the Emperor and Philip II. of Spain.

1557.—The French army being obliged to leave Italy, the Pope made peace with Philip II., who sought pardon and absolution from the Pontiff, for having defended himself against unjust aggression.

1559.—The treaty of Cateau Cambresis regulated on a more certain basis the previously varying limits of the Italian States. It confirmed the cession of Sienna to the Medici family, who now obtained possession of almost the whole of Tuscany, and left Naples and the Duchy of Milan under the recognised sovereignty of Spain.

“From the epoch of the treaty of Cateau Cambresis to the close of the sixteenth century, Italy remained, in one sense, in profound and uninterrupted peace. During this long period of forty-one years, her provinces were neither troubled by a single invasion of foreign armies, nor by any hostilities of importance between her own feeble and nerveless powers. But this half century presented, nevertheless, anything rather than the aspect of public happiness and prosperity: her wretched people enjoyed none of the real blessings of peace. Subject either to the oppressive yoke of their native despots, or to the more general influence of the arch-tyrant of Spain, they were abandoned to

all the exactions of arbitrary government, and compelled to lavish their blood in foreign wars, and in quarrels not their own.”\*

1571.—The Christian powers having been induced, with some difficulty, to league with Venice against the Infidels, who were at this moment infesting the Ionian sea with a tremendous fleet of two hundred and fifty galleys, the celebrated battle of Lepanto was fought near the ancient promontory of Actium,—famous for the victory obtained by Augustus over Antony, and for the only naval battle, says Daru, which ever decided the fate of an empire. The glory of the victory of Lepanto was principally due to the Venetians, but they could not keep the league together, or reap those advantages from it which they ought to have done. On the contrary, two years after, they were fain to secure peace with the Turks by the cession of Cyprus—a beautiful kingdom they had obtained fraudulently, and now lost ingloriously.

The sixteenth century, was for literature and the arts, the most glorious that Italy has ever seen. In spite of their vices and coming misfortunes, nearly every state had its Pericles ; and Leo X. at Rome might even represent Augustus. As if to cast a halo of imperishable glory over her decline, men of the highest genius in every department rose and flourished in numbers that astonish us. One of those great names would have rendered the age worthy of the eternal recollections of posterity ; an Ariosto, a Tasso, a Machiavelli a Guicciardini, a Raphael, a Michel Angelo, a Benvenuto Cellini, a Palladio, a Vignola, would of itself have been title sufficient to that undying glory ; but the sixteenth century saw all these luminaries shining together, with a host of satellites, that would only be deemed inferior planets by being placed in immediate comparison with their great contemporaries.

Percivale's History of Italy.



## The Conspiracy of the Fieschi.



Ecco vediam la maestosa immensa  
Città, che al mar le sponde, il dorso ai monti  
Occupa tutta, e tutta a cerchio adorna.

BETTINELLI.

Che le terre d' Italia tutte piene  
Son di tiranni, ed un Marcel diventa  
Ogni villan che parteggiando viene.

DANTE.

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE FIESCHI.

**W**HAT traveller that has performed the journey between Turin and Genoa, crossing the Apennines that separate the rich plains of Piedmont from the two Riviere and the sea, but remembers with undiminishing delight the views he caught from the lofty pass of the Bocchetta, with a glimpse of the blue Mediterranean (perhaps his first glimpse of that beautiful classical sea !) offering itself to his eye in the distance? After passing the little old town and mountain fortress of Gavi, with its ruined fortifications and riven towers, and going through the large village of Voltaggio, the wayfarer reaches the narrow, rough opening just where the mountains are piled in the most striking and picturesque confusion, and through this close pass, as through a loop-hole, he may gaze over a most enchanting scene.

The descent from this pass is very rapid ; but soon the steep, rough, lofty mount (crowned by the celebrated batteries of the *Sprone*, and a long continuation of towers and walls) against which proud Genoa leans her shoulders, offers itself to the eye, with a variety of mountain scenery equal to any in the lesser Alps. Watch-towers, that perch on the points and angles, church spires, white villages, and country mansions, that rise from the midst of woods of chestnut and oak, or peep between the boles and interstices of the trees, cattle and flocks grazing on the flats, and goats that sound their rustic bells on the cliffs above, clear waters which throw themselves down the steep rocks, or babble along narrow deep valleys—such are among the components of those scenes, and the approach to Genova la Superba !\*

At the foot of the Bocchetta, the Val di Polcevera winds round

\* A new road has been made which winds through the valleys. The traveller now escapes the ruggedness of the pass of the Bocchetta, and loses the beautiful views. I should always prefer the old mountain road, which I have twice taken on foot.

the roots of the mountains that shut in the magnificent city. This valley is exceedingly populous: village succeeds to village with little intermission; the number of old villas and country houses, all fantastically painted on the outside, is astonishing, and conveys an imposing idea of the former affluence and splendour of the Republic. But of all the villages in this beautiful valley, Campo Marone *is*, as it *was* at the date of our story, by far the most conspicuous. Here the noblest and richest of the patricians of Genoa resided in preference, at the seasons of their *villeggiatura*; and during the heats of summer the magnificent maroni, or chestnut-trees, from which the village derived its name and much of its beauty, retained a sylvan freshness, which was most delicious, compared with the atmosphere of the closely-built city, or the more exposed districts of the *riviere* in the immediate vicinity of Genoa.

The most elegant of the villas of Campo Marone was that of Bernardino Spinola. It was not situated in the village, or among the grey edifices that were closely clustered on the shelving hill immediately above it, but stood apart, on a higher and lonelier part of the mountain, concealed, except to the eye of one who approached very near, by a thick wood. There was nothing to strike the vulgar eye in the exterior of this building, for classical purity and taste have an unobtrusiveness and quietness about them that only the refined can appreciate, and *that* by a slow and gentle process of the mind, which partakes of nothing startling, or sudden, or empathic. The true, the pure, and essentially elegant in art wins upon us by degrees like the gentle breeze of evening; it is the false, the irregular, and exaggerated that strikes like the wind of the tempest. There was scarcely one villa in or about Campo Marone but with its stuccoed and bright painted front would have been preferred by the vulgar to that of Bernardino Spinola, with its simple marble façade. The eye of taste, however, could dwell with calm delight on its antique and Grecian grace, and estimate aright the arrangement and beauty of its interior, which was not crowded, but occupied in just proportions by the most exquisite works of art, from the chisel of old

Hellas, or the pencil of her successor—perhaps her rival—modern Italy.

The villa, in position and character, accorded in a wonderful degree with the retiring, refined nature of its occupant.

Bernardino Spinola was connected with the noblest of the Patrician families of Genoa, and had been left at an early age the uncontrolled master of himself and of one of those splendid fortunes which the commerce of the enterprising Republic had made frequent among its subjects. It has been said by a noble of our own days and our own country, who bitterly felt all the melancholy truth of his assertion, that this lordship of oneself, under such circumstances as those of the young Genoese, is “a heritage of woe,” and Bernardino was well nigh forming no exception to the general lot.

With the most ample means of purchasing every sensual enjoyment, and of making himself the arbiter of a seducing society of the young, the thoughtless, the dissipated, the dependent, he drank deep of the cup of dissipation. But the very facility of procuring all these enjoyments caused them to pall upon his appetite, and, fortunately for him, there was a spring in his mind which prevented his carrying them to a satiety which would have ended in misanthropy or apathy, and that animated him with loftier aspirations, and to the pursuits of those pleasures which gold could not buy, nor familiarity render insipid. He broke at once the enfeebled links of the spell-chain that had bound him, only as the hunter's net, the lion while he was sleeping, and renouncing the fascinations of the wine-cup and the midnight revel, the courtesan and the still more dangerous intrigue, betook himself to a life of study and travel. After having resided some time in the different universities of Italy, he visited in succession nearly every country in Europe, and at the period of the present tale, or in the year one thousand five hundred and forty-six, he had but recently returned from a long and very solitary residence in Greece, where his classical predilections had detained him, month after month, and whence he had been only torn at last by important business regarding his



fortune, which he had left in the hands of trustees, that required his presence at Genoa.

The course of life he had led—his studious and retired habits, his long, lonely travels, his seclusion in those fallen but still beautiful regions where every mountain and every vale, every desolated object of antiquity, nay, every stone, gave rise to a deep feeling—his abstractions and imaginative indulgences had purified his heart and refined his intellect; but at the same time they had induced an over delicacy and sensibility that somewhat unfitted him to mix in the every-day concerns of life—which, after all, and unpoetical as they may be, are concerns in which we *ought* to take a part and interest, in justice to that society of which we form a portion, and particularly so, if, as in Bernardino's case, we enjoy in that society the advantages of birth, distinction, and wealth.

The friends who had pressed his return, expected that from his position, and the knowledge and experience he had acquired of the different governments of Europe, he would actively engage himself in the affairs of his own country; but he had disqualified himself for the politics of the Genoese Republic, and for cramped and confined Italian politics in general, by his contemplations of a higher order of things, and by his adoration of some of the great characters of Ancient Greece and Rome, compared to whom the public men of this day and country sank into puppets. The circumstances of the times were indeed such as might have chilled the energies of a less susceptible and more ardent man. The artful game that had been carrying on between the little states of Italy was now thrown from the table by the intervention of the great nations beyond the Alps. Charles V. and Francis I. were disputing the mastery of Italy:—the hopes that might have cheered many a generous spirit, of the union and independence of the Italians generally, were now blighted; and Bernardino could not interest himself much in the chances of their masters,—or whether the Emperor or King obtained the supremacy. Moreover, he could not help feeling that this humiliating crisis had been produced by the public and private vices of his countrymen;—he could not avoid seeing that these vices were persevered in, and that the

whole course of public affairs was a tissue of craft and dishonour. Had a new Cola Rienzi arisen, with more virtue and consistency of character than that tribune,—had a grand scheme been produced for the relieving of the whole of Italy from foreign thralldom, Bernardino might have staked his fortune and life, with a bounding heart;—though it must be remarked, whilst his imagination had formed too high a Utopia, his early and unfortunate experience of men made him doubtful of the engines with which he would have to work, and that he had none of that “youthful hope, that lively assurance, which is the pledge of success.”

As it was, with all his talents and acquirements, no one was less a man of the world than Bernardino Spinola, or less calculated to lead to those changes in men and measures that he sighed for. In his more private feelings, he was still more remote from the worldly scale. With an ardent temperament and imagination, with a disposition to love, with the “necessity of loving” strong within him, he had formed to himself an ideal idol, and worshipping it, in the true spirit of Platonism, (which in the sixteenth century was perhaps not so general in Italy as in the fourteenth, but which still obtained among many,) he had shunned for some years all intercourse with any fair objects less unreal.

According to the fanciful philosophy of Plato, in whose study Bernardino had passed so many hours, “Our souls emanate from God, and unto him they return again. They are pre-existent to our bodies in other worlds. They are more or less perfect, and the most perfect love those which are most perfect also. They are connected in pairs by a predestined and immutable sympathy: without partaking of the sensual perturbations of the body, they are necessitated to follow it blindly, led by fatality or chance, for the procreation of the species. Each soul burns with the desire to find its companion; and when they do meet together in their pilgrimage on earth, their love becomes so much the more ardent, because the matter by which they are enclosed prevents their re-union. On these occasions their pleasures, their sufferings, their ecstasies, are inexpressible; each endeavours to make itself known to the other; a celestial light burns in the eyes; an im-

mortal beauty beams in the countenance; the heart feels less tendency to earth, and they mutually incite each other to the exaltation and purification of their virtue. In proportion as they love each other, they are lifted towards God, who is their common origin; and in proportion as they feel the pains of their exile upon earth, and their captivity in matter, they desire to be freed, in order that they may unite eternally in Heaven.”\*

Now Bernardino, when imbued with these notions, and with the ardour and imaginativeness of youth little diminished, had seen, or fancied he had seen, in a foreign land the object of this “immutable sympathy,” his soul’s partner. Already a nun, the virgin spouse of God, their meeting and mingling on earth with “ecstasies inexpressible,” must be impossible; but like Petrarca, his favourite poet, as he who had carried the Platonics of love to their greatest extent,—like Petrarca, who was separated from his Laura, by a less sacred and less insurmountable barrier, Bernardino could continue to adore until death, and then the pre-existent soul would be united with its pre-existent partner in “the third Heaven!” Indeed, it was the very impossibility of their union on earth, the impossibility of ever seeing or knowing more of his spiritual mistress than he obtained at a short glance, in which he had fancied, however, all the endeavours of her soul to make itself known to his, all the celestial light in the eye, all the immortal beauty in the countenance, which entered into his system, that fostered the imaginative idol of his heart, and gave strength to his captivation.

Had the fanciful young man mingled much in society, and taken an active part in worldly affairs immediately after the casual encounter, his impression might have been weakened or effaced; but his lonely, musing travels, and the secluded life he led for so long a time, so deepened their traces, that he fancied they were now indelible, and that whatever chance or fatality might do with his body (the one or the other had led the Platonic Petrarca’s into an amour, the fruit of which was an illegitimate child!) his soul

would remain divorced on earth, from love. Since his return to Genoa, he had seen more of men and of women too ; and as the fair Genoese are among the fairest of Italians, and he had stood their charms heart-whole, he might be the more confirmed in his theory.

Bernardino was in this frame of mind when one lovely summer evening he went out from his elegant house into his gardens, where, after walking for a while, he sat himself down in a bower that faced the setting sun, and whiled away the time in musing and music. His fancies turned, as usual, to that important point of his life in which he had seen his predestined love : he sang the following simple verses descriptive of that meeting, which, so *simple* in itself, had become so complicate in his theory, and so important in his imagination.

I can ne'er forget that moment,  
In a Gothic church of Spain,  
'Neath a roof all-arch'd and towering,  
Dimly lit through colour'd pane.

The chaunted mass was finished,  
Yet its echoes seem'd to stay  
Among those aisles and columns tall,  
Where few remain'd to pray.

The incense still was floating there  
Like breath of Eastern clime ;  
And the grey belfrey overhead  
Toll'd slow its solemn chime.

The dark veil'd nuns had left their seats  
In the grated gallery,  
And ta'en their way unto their cells,  
Headed by their proud ladie.

I stood behind the altar high,  
Looking through a lattice sheen ;  
My years were young, nor cold my heart,—  
Would I were as I have been !

With solemn steps they pass'd along,  
Gazing, saint-like, on the ground,  
And o'er the face of every nun  
Close the vestal crape was wound.

*THE CONSPIRACY OF THE FIESCHI.*

Fancy might figure charms ;  
Nothing met my ardent glance,  
Until I saw across the hall  
The lingering last advance.

Her veil was parted o'er her brow,  
Each charm reveal'd to sight ;  
And meeting mine, her dark black eye  
Beam'd with most radiant light.

Once to withdraw it she essay'd ;  
Blushingly she gazed again ;  
Her steps were slower, and she seem'd  
As though to loiter fain.

But soon a voice of harshest tone  
Cried " Bianca, why so slow ?"  
She hurried then—she disappeared :  
I never saw her more.

But, oh the glance of those dark eyes,  
And oh that face so pale,  
And oh that moment in the church  
Beyond the lengthened aisle,

Have never, never been forgot  
In all life's wild career,  
And still my sober'd heart can give  
To them a sigh—a tear !

Long years have pass'd—and I have been  
In regions far from Spain ;  
But whether on the mountain bold,  
Or on the stormy main,

And whether in the crowded hall,  
Or in the chamber still,  
Or toiling o'er the sun-burnt plain,  
Or regions drear and chill,

And whether in dear Italy,  
With fair, kind friends around,  
Or bending low at Beauty's shrine,  
On Hellas' classic ground,

And whether cheer'd by Fortune's smile,  
Or wither'd by her frown—  
That church, that face, those coal-black eyes,  
Long veil, and sable gown,

Have never ceased to haunt my soul,  
And make me sigh in vain ;  
And turn with blessings to the past,  
And thee—young nun of Spain.

‘A very pretty song indeed, and a pretty confession of what estranges you from your countrywomen, and makes you lead a hermit’s life !’ said a soft playful voice.

Bernardino looked up and saw the face and form of La Dama Cibo, the wife of his neighbour Fiesco ; but who was she who hung so modestly, so retiringly on her arm ? It was a young lady of the Fieschi family, who, having passed all her life in a monastery, had of her own free will determined to take the veil, and was now abroad for a week or two, to see that world of which she had hitherto known nothing, which she despised, and was about to abandon for ever. This brief glimpse of the ways of society is generally prescribed by the institutions of the monastic orders, which would not receive a renunciation of the world, whose value or extent is not somewhat known to the young person renouncing. In most cases, where the fate of the novice was determined upon by her family, this short egress from the convent was either not spent in the manner intended, or was a cruelty, by showing the young victim pleasures which could never be hers, and awakening notions which might never have penetrated the happy ignorance of the cell. But the family and friends of Emilie de’ Fieschi were by no means anxious that she should be hurried through her short period of liberty, and sent back to the noviciate, and then to the veil ; on the contrary, all their anxiety was to procure for her some such charm as would overthrow her own resolution of becoming a nun, and bind her to society, where her birth and fortune assured her an enviable post. It was in some such view as this, and at some other instigations of her husband, that the Countess had brought her niece into the garden of their eccentric but amiable neighbour, where the imaginative Bernardino was now gazing like one entranced, or about to be so, on the youthful Emilie.

As he looked in her face, he was struck with a resemblance, real

or imaginary, to the image that had so long haunted him, to the young Spanish nun. She wore the dress of the same order, the same black robe, the same long, sable veil, parted over her forehead, as *she* behind the altar of the Gothic church. Emilie's eyes were also as black as hers, and seemed for a moment fixed on his, with the same intenseness and expression.

These points were indeed striking in their similarity; and making the first impression, his warm fancy added to them, until he saw the very identity of his Platonic mistress in the young Genoese.

His ardent, imaginative mind was filled to overflowing by this image, and all that it recalled; and, spite of his sense of the duties of gallantry, he sat several minutes fixed to his seat in the bower, and his eyes on his blushing visitor, utterly unable to speak to her or her companion. The noble wife of Fiesco, evidently delighted at the effect the charms of her niece produced on the eccentric recluse; which, with a woman's quickness of penetration in these matters, was already met by a corresponding feeling in the breast of the young devotee; and before she rallied Bernardino, she said to herself, "St. George to my aid! and I shall not only save a pretty girl from a convent, but a handsome fellow from the life of a hermit."

She then spoke aloud to the platonician: "And have you no word of welcome to offer to ladies, who, undismayed by the reports of your philosophy and severity, have dared to intrude upon your solitude, and to listen to the prettiest song that was ever composed to a pair of black eyes?"

"Noble lady! excellent neighbour!" replied Bernardino, turning his looks with difficulty from Emilie to her aunt. "I am more than grateful for such a visit to such a dreaming, somewhat melancholy visionary as myself; and it is only my surprise—its unexpectedness—my—in short, that hath prevented me from welcoming you as you merit."

"No compliment, gentle sir; it is enough that you expel us not; but the Count, my husband, would have speech with you; and I have preceded him but a few minutes, to show to my niece

Emilie the beauties of your villa, of which she has heard, even in her Convent of Saint Clare's."

The name of the monastery being the same as that in which he had seen the young Spaniard, thrilled him to the heart; his infatuation was increased, but its object scarcely changed, for he felt as if he still worshipped her whose image he had seen but for a moment, but which, exalted by his singular platonic system, and purified by poetry and ideality, had never quitted him. He felt as if he worshipped all this again in the young Genoese; as if that meeting of which he had despaired on earth was vouchsafed to the purity and constancy of his passion. But would it not be transitory like its predecessor? was Emilie not to be like Bianca, the inmate of a convent, the vestal spouse of Heaven? or why that dress?

These thoughts went rapidly through his mind, and occupied him, even as he made a courteous reply to the dame; and issuing from the bower, prepared to escort her and her blushing relative over the grounds.

As Bernardino walked a little in advance of the ladies, turning frequently to explain some object of art, or to point out some beautiful view, and as his handsome countenance glowed with excitement, the young Emilie felt for the first time in her life that there might be happiness in another mode of life than that of a nun.

When they had finished their survey of the grounds, the animated host, whom a few minutes had made a different man, led them towards the house.

A pretty piece of coquetry on the part of the dame as to whether she with her niece could or could not entrust herself to the lares of a bachelor, was most opportunely interrupted by the arrival of Count Fiesco himself. After a few words of salutation, the Count, with eyes, in which there was more enquiry than in his words, fixed on the gentle devotee, said to her, "Well Emilie, what think you of my noble neighbour's taste?—is the villa Bernardino Spinola as fine a place as it has been described to you?"

"It is beautiful, my uncle—most beautiful!" replied Emilie.

"It will be thine own, an' thou wilt," thought the Countess.



"Was there ever a voice so beautiful as that!" thought Bernardino, who now heard her speak for the first time.

"It worketh well," mused the Count, eyeing the party; "the moody philosopher will be won by beauty and love to embrace my cause."

The accomplished host now ushered them into his mansion, where the parties stayed some time examining the pictures and statues, and other works of art it contained. The Countess would have retired with her fair niece when this was done, and left her lord the opportunity he desired of conversing with the no longer melancholy recluse, but the Count himself opposed this.

"Not so, Eleanora," said he: "the business I came on may wait till to-morrow, since our kind neighbour is so cheerful this evening—let us converse here awhile as we are, and perhaps he will honour our conversazione and our supper!"

"Willingly—most willingly," replied Bernardino, with an alacrity he had long been a stranger to—for he had looked into the eyes of the young devotee, that said, as plainly as eyes could say, "Come!"

And accordingly the little party sat in the most elegant, cool sala of the villa, until it was time for the noble Fieschi to receive their evening visitors; and then Bernardino showing to Emilie an assiduity and closeness of attention not usual in Italy to an unmarried lady, (and to a devotee,) accompanied his guests to the Villa Fieschi, and there he stayed till a late hour, and then he returned with the intelligence, most readily, and as it were carelessly given by the Lady Eleonora, that her young and beautiful niece was not destined by her family to a convent; on the contrary, that her family would be overjoyed to detain her in the world, and would give all proper encouragement to a suitor who should undertake the task of changing her resolves.

"If it should be my fate," mused Bernardino, "to attach to myself, while it is yet time, so lovely and gentle a being—if the Nun of Spain was only offered for a moment to my eyes, to keep my heart pure until this young novice of Genoa should claim my adoration—if the one was but a type of the other—or if they were

both but images of the same soul,—and if it should be my fate here, as it is sometimes given to peculiarly favoured mortality, to meet and mingle with my soul's half, I may taste on earth the happiness of Heaven !”

And with such reasoning as this, and still attaching himself to his curious system, he at last fell asleep to dream of Emilie.

There was more than one object proposed in the visits that had thus broken on the solitude of Bernardino Spinola. The Countess, who was herself still a young and very handsome woman, had been anxious only to introduce her young kinswoman to the attention of one so noble, wealthy, accomplished and benevolent ; but her husband, who was as anxious as herself that Emilie should not be buried in a convent, hoped moreover, by her fascinations, to gain over the philosopher to certain revolutionary views of his own, about which he had already sounded him, and found him cold or inimical. His wife was as yet ignorant of his ambitious projects, and had been overjoyed at his ready concurrence with her views ; and she thought it was only to forward them, that he repeated his visit to the Villa Spinola on the following day.

In this interview, after some remarks on the Genoese nobles they had met the preceding evening, and some conversation about the fair Emilie, which Bernardino would fain have prolonged, the Count entered cautiously on his old subject. He stated, and in stronger terms than he had hitherto employed, that the liberty of the Genoese Republic was now nothing more than a name ; that the Dorias, with a small number of the noble families, to the utter exclusion of all the rest, governed Genoa with absolute sway ; and that the Emperor Charles V., who had been declared Protector of the city, in reality acted as master, paying the Dorias to do his will. But the spirit of Independence was reviving in Genoa ; thousands cried for the restitution of a popular form of government ; and he could add, of his own private knowledge, that many of the patrician families were ready to head the enterprise and to strike a blow—he did not venture as yet to say the blow was to be a double murder !

In reply, the too delicate and deliberating Bernardino admitted

the extinction of many popular rights, and the unjust exclusion of most of the patricians from all share in the government of the state ; but he reminded the ardent Fiesco of the dreadful anarchy that had preceded the administration of the really great Andrea Doria, who had been hailed as the restorer of Genoese liberty, when, twenty years before, he had expelled the troops of the French king, who then exercised the dangerous office of Protector of the Republic, with much less regard to its right than the Emperor ; he dwelt, with no enthusiasm indeed, on the comparative tranquillity and prosperity Genoa had enjoyed for twenty years under Doria, and was now enjoying under the shadow of the Imperial Eagle, and from an intimate acquaintance with the distracted, enfeebled state of Italy, he insisted that nothing could be done with that almost certainty of success, lacking which, all attempts at revolution were crimes to our fellow-citizens, against the authority and will of Charles V. at this moment.

“ But my noble countryman ! we have the support of the French King—of Charles’ rival, the generous and gallant Francis I.,” said Fiesco, interrupting him.

“ If we are to return to the old story—to a choice of arbiters or masters,” replied Bernardino, with some warmth, “ I cannot move even a finger in the cause. I have yet to learn that the supremacy of the French is more honourable and less oppressive to Genoa—to Italy, than that of the Germans and Spaniards ; and I know that to procure it here blood must be spilt, and certain injuries inflicted on the well-being of my fellow-citizens. No ! unless I see—which I cannot do—the means of working out a revolution in Italy by wholly Italian instruments, and in which, nor Francis nor Charles shall have any part, I must remain as I have been, a melancholy ——”

“ As to Italian instruments,” said Fiesco impatiently, “ I may tell you in secret, that we are sure of the connivance or assistance of the Pope Paul, who hates Andrea Doria our tyrant.”

“ The policy of the Court of Rome is so dark and complicated, and so little in accordance with my notions of liberty and Italian

independence, that I should shrink from so dangerous an ally," said Bernardino.

"But—again I claim your secrecy, my noble friend—there are other princes in Italy who will aid us in our endeavours to recover the liberty of Genoa!"

"There is not one of them has left a shadow of liberty in his own states," said Bernardino.

Fiesco blushed at this truth, but continued: "Still it may suit their interests and feelings to assist in our liberation; and when we have disposed of the Dorias, we may be left to form our own government."

"All this is too hypothetical," replied Bernardino after a long pause; "and I cannot recall the feuds and factions that so long desolated and disgraced Genoa when she *was* left to herself, and her turbulent republicans, without dreading their recurrence. When you have effected a revolution at the cost of blood by the hands of the populace, do you think that you can easily reduce them to order, and restore them to that respect for the patrician body which you consider at once essential to your own honour and the well-being of the Republic?"

"Tis useless to prolong this conversation: he is not yet ripe for my purpose," thought Fiesco, who then exacting another promise of inviolable secrecy from Bernardino, took his leave, again musing as he went homeward. "But he must be ours—his name, his family connexions, his great wealth, his reputation for wisdom and worth among the mob, who most reverence those who most shun them, render his adhesion to our plots of the greatest importance. Yes! he must be with us, and my fair niece must so strengthen the spell she has cast over him, as to make him do what I wish, to obtain her as his bride!"

The present feelings and disposition of the so lately all-devout Emilie favoured her uncle's projects, for not only had she sent word to her dear Lady Abbess that she felt she was not worthy of the beatitude of the monastic life, which she therefore renounced for a more worldly one, but she confessed in secret to her aunt,

that it was Bernardino had changed her notions on the subject ; and that, if she was not already in love with him, she *thought* she soon should be.

\* Invited in the most pressing manner by uncle and by aunt, received with endearing, intoxicating smiles by the niece, it was no wonder that Bernardino, philosopher as he was, should be spell-bound, and constantly at the villa of the Count Lavagna de' Fieschi, or that he should accommodate his growing passion to his philosophy and whimsical theory. His long-cherished passion for the ideal had not destroyed his relish for the real, and he soon loved the fair Emilie as she deserved to be loved. Once convinced of this fact, he threw off his platronics, and asked her hand from her uncle, who was her guardian.

This was the moment on which the Count had calculated. He expressed his sense of the honour intended his niece and family ; he had nothing to object to his proposals and arrangements ; Bernardino was, of all the patricians of Genoa, the man he would have chosen for his lovely relative ; but he could not—he would not—consent to the union unless Bernardino took part in a conspiracy which he had now almost matured, for the overthrow of the Dorias, and a total change in the government of Genoa.

Deep in love as he was, the recluse would not abandon his principles ; and after having repeated and lengthened his former arguments on the subject of Italian revolution, and endeavoured in vain to prove to the Count the iniquity of the measures he proposed, and the great uncertainty of what might be their issue, he declined, in language as firm as that used by Fiesco regarding his marriage with Emilie—that he could not and would not take part in the conspiracy. Angry words on the part of the Count, and a fellow conspirator who was with him, succeeded ; nothing but the admirable equanimity of Bernardino could have prevented these words from degenerating into a personal encounter ; but he coolly ended the interview by giving the promise required of him, that he would not betray his neighbour to the Dorias, although the Count swore at the same time he should never again approach his niece.

As the conspirators left the beautiful, tranquil villa with stormy minds, Verrina, the Count's companion, one of the leaders in the dark plot, "a man of desperate fortune, capable alike of advising and executing the most audacious deeds,"\* earnestly proposed to take off Bernardino by secret assassination, lest he should make any disclosure ; but Fiesco was prevented by his own more honourable feelings, and his full confidence in the honour of his friend, from listening to his horrible suggestions.

The lover was spared the blow of the dagger, but he soon found his separation from Emilie almost as cruel as that could have been. Every attempt to see her, or to correspond with her failed ; and his beautiful retreat became odious to him soon after, when the Count removed with his family from Campo Marone to the city of Genoa. He possessed a splendid mansion in the city, but he had given up the possession of it to a noble relative, with whom he was now fain to reside as a visitor, in order to be nearer to the object of his love, and to see what should pass.

From the time Fiesco had made his final proposal to him, he had heard no more of his plot ; and seeing the Count even gayer than had been his wont, and entirely abandoned to pleasure and dissipation and that month passed away after month, with no sinister event, he began to indulge in the hope that the conspiracy had been abandoned, and that a return to more moderate views would induce the Fieschi to renew their friendship with him.

But Gian Luigi Fiesco, Count of Lavagna, possessed the qualities of a conspirator in a degree that renders his character conspicuous even among the very remarkable conspirators of Italy. His gaiety and dissipation were mere masks to the intense and deadly purposes from which he never swerved for a moment. Even from the banqueting-hall he was corresponding with or receiving messages from the French Ambassador at Rome : the whispers in the corner of the ball room, accompanied by hearty

laughs were not about the party present, and the pretty, gay Genoese dames, but related to his confederacy with Farnese Duke of Parma,\* the Pope's natural son ; and it was not to ply the wine-cup that he would often detain his numerous guests within his "black and white"† palace until the rising sun gilded the long line of fortresses that fringed the mountain of the Sprone behind Genoa. The four galleys he purchased from the Pope, and manned chiefly with his own vassals, were never designed, as he stated they were, to cruize against the Turks ; and it was with other sentiments than generosity or thoughtless profuseness, that he lavished his great fortune on the populace and the needy adventurers that thronged Genoa.

As Andrew Doria was now at a very advanced age, Fiesco and his party might perhaps have taken patience until a natural death should relieve them of him ; but the old Doge had a favourite relative, who was not only to inherit his immense private fortune, but was known to aim at being likewise the successor of his grand-uncle in power. This Giannettino Doria was haughty, insolent, and overbearing ; his vices and follies did more than anything else in strengthening the party of the Fieschi ; and it was now determined by the conspirators that he should be murdered with his grand-uncle.

Whatever may have been the feelings with which the Count first embraced the project of revolution, it is certain that his heart was vitiated and hardened in its prosecution. By the advice of Verrina, he abandoned his plan of re-establishing the republic on its former footing, and placing it again under the protection of the French monarch ; but on the contrary, he resolved to usurp himself the power of Andrew Doria, and be himself the despot of Genoa. With the same insidious counsellor at his ear, Fiesco formed the most treacherous, infamous, sacrilegious projects for disposing of the venerable Doria and his friends,

\* This Prince was disgusted with the Emperor (to whom the Dorias were subservient) for refusing to grant him the investiture of the Duchy of Parma.

† The black and white fronts of the Genoese palaces were formerly distinctive of the highest nobility. Their material was marble.

At first he proposed to murder them as the foul conspirators the Pazzi had murdered Giuliano de' Medici at Florence, during the celebration of high mass in the cathedral church of Genoa ; but this plan was abandoned, as Andrew Doria was frequently obliged, by the infirmities of old age, to absent himself from public religious ceremonies. He next concerted that he would invite both grand-uncle and nephew, with their principal adherents, to a friendly entertainment in his own house, and there butcher them ; and it was only owing to the caprice of Giannettino Doria, who left the town on the day of the invitation and put off the party, that the crime was not perpetrated in this execrable manner. At last Fiesco determined to do by open force what he could not do without delays, on which there was no calculating, by stratagem ; and with Verrina, who next to himself was the great disposer of the revolution, he fixed on the night between the second and third\* of January for its execution.

On the morning of that fatal day, as Bernardino Spinola was passing the splendid mansion of the Fieschi, thinking only of Emilie, he was surprised to see the Count issue from its gate, and come up and address him in a smiling, friendly manner. They had not spoken since their quarrel at the villa : the voice of an old friend resuming again its tones of goodwill and affection almost brought a flush of tears to the eyes of the sensitive Bernardino, who continued, in spite of his abhorrence of the plot that had been proposed to him, but which he now fancied must have been abandoned, to admire Fiesco, as all Genoa admired him, for no man could possess in a more eminent degree the qualities that captivate the heart and affections of men.

"Peace be unto you, Signior Count !" said Bernardino, when his feelings allowed him to speak ; "peace be between you and me ! It is not my fault if——"

"Let us forget the past !" said Fiesco hastily,—*"let us again*

\* Muratori differs by a day in the date. "*Scelse la notte precedente ai dì 2 Gennajo di quest' anno, per effettuare il suo perverso disegno.*"—Robertson, *Annali*, ann. 1547.



break bread together ! I have a few friends assembled here, and am going to bid more to my festive table,—prithee enter and join them !”

Overjoyed at this reconciliation, and receiving the Count's promise that he would soon return, Bernardino walked up to the gates of the Fiesco palace, which were left hospitably open, as it to invite every comer. He entered a spacious court surrounded by lofty walls ; but his pleasure gave place to surprise and alarm, when he saw this court crowded with armed men of all classes, and that strong guards with drawn swords, posted under the walls near the gates, suffered no person who had entered to return. Seizing his opportunity when he thought no one observed him, he was creeping through this silent but desperate-looking mob towards one of the gates, and had put his hand on his sword with the intention of fighting his way out, when two conspirators placed their arquebuses to his breast, and without speaking pointed across the court to the house. There was no misunderstanding such an intimation : resistance or remonstrance would have been absurd ; so Bernardino walked on and entered the mansion with as much coolness as he could command. The antechambers were filled with implements of war, and the inner apartments he found crowded with conspirators, who were engaged in busy conference, and by Genoese nobles and citizens, decoyed like himself, who gazed at each other with astonishment and terror. Of both these classes, Bernardino was intimately acquainted with many individuals ; but he left to themselves those who were evidently taking part in the conspiracy or approved of it, to join his complaints with the citizens who were protesting against the violent restraint put upon their persons, and wondering how and when all this would terminate. Hour passed after hour, and the Count returned not ; but in his stead Bernardino saw Verrina arrive in the palace with a number of desperate-looking men, portions of the selected crews of the galleys and of the vassals of the Fieschi. Against Verrina he had always felt an antipathy : he *thought* it was he who had led his friend ; he *knew* that his character was dark and treacherous, and every way demoralized :

—he trembled at the idea of the nature and termination of a revolution effected by so much vice. Verrina, however, soon relieved him from his odious presence, going away with several others of the Count's most devoted partisans, to perambulate the city, and to invite, in the name of their patron, to supper in his palace, many other principal citizens, whose disgust with the administration of the Dorias was known or suspected. Of the multitude that now crowded the courtyard and halls of the Fiesco palace, and who kept every minute increasing, only a few knew the purpose—the whole of the purpose—for which they were assembled. It was curious to observe these men looking around them with astonished eyes, wondering what was to ensue, each of them evidently imagining the other to be in the secret,—all of them diffident and suspicious. Bernardino, who knew more, was obliged to be silent; for, whenever he approached any citizen of distinction not in the secret, he observed two ferocious-looking satellites of Verrina armed with arquebuses, watching him with malignant eyes, and plainly listening to what he said. As the long hours however went on, his impatience became so irritated, that as he paced up and down the marble hall through the crowd, he could not help murmuring to some of his acquaintances at their unjustifiable detention; and when a nobleman, one of the bidden guests, who was known at Genoa for his devotion to the good things of the table, said aloud, “By St. George! and this is a curious feast our munificent friend Fiesco hath so pressingly invited us to! Doth he mean to feed us on guns and swords, with daggers and pistols for entremets?” Bernardino was going to assume a higher tone, and to try the effect of his eloquence in exciting his friends to some more energetic process, when one of Verrina's bravoës whispered in his ear, “Silence or death!”

Meanwhile, the shades of night were fast closing on the singular scene, and concealing the agitated countenances of the conspirators and their alarmed guests. But now Bernardino heard the well known voice of the Count, crying out “Lights! ho, there! lights in every hall!” and the next minute saw him enter the

apartment preceded by a page carrying a torch, and with a gay countenance and perfectly unembarrassed demeanour. The conspirators surrounded Fiesco, and he spoke with them apart.

This extraordinary man had been employed since morning in visiting his friends, passing some hours with them in his usual gay, free style ; and he had just returned from paying his court at the palace of the Dorias, where (while we abhor his treachery, we must admire his perfect self-possession !) he comported himself with his accustomed respectful, yet frank and friendly manner, and where, watching the countenance and behaviour both of old Andrew Doria and his grand-nephew Giannettino, he saw that they had not the least foresight or dread of that storm which had been so long gathering, and was now ready to burst over their heads.\*

Fiesco was not long absorbed in the circle of the conspirators ; he leaped on a marble table that stood at the end of the crowded hall, which was now illuminated by numerous lamps and torches, and addressed the Genoese with all his eloquence and energy, and a look full of alacrity and confidence. He told them it was not for a sordid feast, but for a deed of valour, he had assembled them there. That it was to strike a blow for liberty and immortal renown,—to overthrow the exorbitant, intolerable power of the Dorias,—to relieve Genoa from them and the partiality and interference of the Emperor, that he had bidden them to the palace of the Fieschi. He exposed the blind security of the tyrants, and his own providence and all-sufficient means. Nothing could be easier than the blow contemplated ! The generous effort that was to deliver their country from tyranny was certain of success, without being accompanied with danger.

At the termination of this spirited address, Fiesco's vassals and hirelings shouted with enthusiasm. The adventurers and desperadoes who had been collected there in great numbers were overjoyed at the prospect of the confusion and licence an insurrection would afford them. The more noble and the more virtuous saw

\* Robertson. Foglietto.

themselves completely in the power of the mob, and durst not discover their inward sentiments. In short, the whole assembly applauded, or feigned to applaud, the undertaking and the spirit of the Count.

Fiesco was crossing the hall elated by this applause, when Bernardino approached him, and demanded his liberty, as he, for one, would not accede to what was proposed.

"Are you mad?" replied the Count in a whisper, "to provoke men whose passions I may not be able to control."

"Let that consideration stay you even now!" said Bernardino in the same low tone, and laying his hand on his friend's arm; "think, noble Count, what will be the fate of Genoa when *these* and their *uncontrollable* passions are let loose upon her!"

"What! still so lady-hearted!" replied Fiesco; "then go and sacrifice your share in our glory—but promise first to remain quiet until——"

"I can make no such promise, with the feeling I have to go at once to the gallant old Doria, who, be the defects of his government what they may, deserves not to be murdered in his bed!" said Bernardino, interrupting him.

"Then, without that promise you must tarry here for an hour or two!" exclaimed Fiesco, reddening. "Ho, there! Scannabecchi! take charge of this foolish recreant! hurt not a hair of his head, but see that he escapes not from this palace till I am master of Andrew Doria's;" and leaving Bernardino in the hands of one of the desperate villains who had been watching him, the Count quitted the hall.

He was going on a mission of love and gentleness: his ambition and dark conspirings had not diminished his sense of his noble lady's beauties and virtues; he still loved his wife with tender affection, and he could not depart on his daring enterprise without taking a kind farewell. He found her with her lovely niece, the Lady Emilie, trembling and in tears. They had long seen the palace crowded with armed men; she had naturally concluded some hazardous deed was contemplated, and she was full of anguish and uncertainty as to what might be her husband's fate.

When he entered the room, she rushed to his embrace ; and as soon as tears and sobs would permit her to speak, she implored he would tell his faithful, loving wife what perilous deed he had in hand. Fiesco, who had never before breathed a word to her of the matter, now told her all he had undertaken. This confirmed the worst of the doubtings that for many hours had agonized her affectionate, virtuous heart ; her foreboding mind might have felt the fatal issue of the dark conspiracy, and she wept and prayed the with energy of despair, that he would yet renounce his purpose.

With great difficulty Fiesco, who, resolute as he was, could not help being somewhat unmanned by this tender scene, disengaged himself from his wife's entwining arms and passionate embrace. He said all he could to soothe her and to inspire her with his own sanguine hopes. Determined at length to rush from difficulties into which "an excess of tenderness had betrayed him," he gently took her by the hand, and led her to a window of the apartment which commanded a view of the greater part of the magnificent city, and the port, and the fortified mountain of the Sprone, against which proud Genoa leans. He stretched out his hand towards the town, where the marble black and white mansions of the Genoese aristocracy, the palaces of the great Durazzi, the Balbi, the Serra, the Negroni, and the *Dorias*, were shining in the moonlight, with the pleasant suburb of Albaro beyond them and the city walls, on gentle hills covered with elegant villas—he turned that hand towards the magnificent port, where proud galleys and rich argosies too numerous to count, lay crowded at anchor, with the far stretching sea ruffled by a gentle breeze, and now and then streaked by a passing vessel, or shadowed by a drifting cloud, flowing freely beyond them ; and when his virtuous wife had seen all these and the glory thereof, Fiesco exclaimed :

"To-morrow, my dearest Eleonora, you shall behold yourself mistress of all this, of all Genoa, or never see me more."

She shrieked and turned again to embrace him, but he threw off her fond hand and ran out of the room, in which his lady now fainted in the arms of the weeping and terrified Emilie.

In a very few minutes the Count re-appeared among the con-

spirators, clad in complete and massy armour. The final plans and modes of operation were now arranged, and these desperate men waited impatiently for the moment of action. It arrived at last: and as the clocks of the city sounded the hour of midnight, they rushed with determined hearts from the palace of the Fieschi into the streets of the city.

As Bernardino saw them take their departure, band after band, and each looking more ferocious than the preceding one, he shuddered at the horrors that might be committed, and longed for the moment when he should know the worst.

The first operation of the Count was to make himself master of the gate of the city called Dell' Arco, and this he did without meeting with any resistance. His two brothers, Girolamo and Ottobuono, he dispatched to assault and seize the gate of San Tommaso, while he now reserved for himself the post of importance and of greatest danger, and attacked the twenty galleys of Andrew Doria, that lay in the Darsena, or little harbour, whose mouth was already blocked up by the bold Verrina, with Fiesco's galley, which was pretended to have been fitted out against the Turks. But the latter precaution seems to been scarcely required; for Doria's anchored galleys were no more in a condition to escape than to resist; they were at the moment unrigged and disarmed, and had no crew on board, except the slaves chained to the oar. The Count at once obtained possession of them, though not without a tremendous tumult made by the galley-slaves, who at first knew not what fate the attack foreboded for them, and then shouted and applauded at the welcome intelligence of a revolution.

At the same time the other conspirators, after a smart conflict with the guards, gained the gate of San Tommaso, whence they intended to pass at once to the Doria Palace, situated beyond the city walls, and to murder Andrew and Giannettino. But Giannettino in the meanwhile had been awaked by the terrible noise from the Darsena, and believing only that some quarrel, or a rising, had taken place among the galley-slaves, he hastily dressed himself, and preceded by a single page, whc

carried a torch, he ran to the gate of San Tommaso, and imperiously demanded to enter, for his evil fortune he entered; the next moment the furious conspirators, with many wounds, extended him dead in the shadow of that gate. Had they obeyed their instructions, and then rushed on to the palace, Andrew Doria, who was in bed oppressed with the weight of fourscore years, and tormented by the gout,\* must have shared his grand-nephew's fate; but the Count's brother, Girolamo de' Fieschi, from the sordid consideration of preventing the popular plunder of that rich palace during the confusion, forbade his followers to advance. It was this saved the old warrior and statesman, for it gave some of his friends time to warn him of all that had happened, of the assassination of his grand-nephew, of the fate he had to expect himself, and dragging his infirm body, now doubly over-burthened by the affliction of his soul, to his palace gate, he mounted a mule with difficulty, and rode off in the direction of La Masone, a castle belonging to the Spinoli; while the whole city behind him seemed exclaiming with one voice, "Liberty and the Fieschi!"

But where was he whose name was thus coupled with the glorious name of Liberty—a word so often abused, and notoriously so in the present instance, when it was principally shouted by the mob, who were anxious only for the pillage of the nobles' palaces? --where was the bold, the confident Count, who had roused into action these perilous elements? At the moment when his success seemed complete, or nothing remaining for him to do but to seize the Palazzo Publico, whence he might hurl his sentences of death or banishment on the partisans of the murdered Dorias, (for he doubted not that by this time his brother Girolamo had disposed of both,) at this moment, when all-triumphant, and elated with every prospect that could flatter his ambition, as he was passing on a plank from one galley to another, the plank overturned, and, heavily armed as he was, he sank into the sea to rise no more!

So great was the noise and confusion, that this awful accident

\* "Stava egli in letto, stanco sotto il peso di ottanta anni, e maltrattato dalle gotte."—Muratori, Annali.

was not known for some time. Verrina was the first who discovered it, and dreading its consequences, he kept it as secret as he could, hoping thus to gain time to conclude a treaty with the senators that should put Genoa in the power of the conspirators. But the dread news of the death of the man whom they adored, and whom alone they trusted, soon spread among the conspirators and the people, and carried discouragement with it. His brother Girolamo, a giddy youth, acted in the most imprudent manner: the Senate, who had now assembled in the Palace of the Republic, assumed the courage the other party were losing, and by daybreak the conspirators, abandoned by the populace, were glad to take to flight, and abandon with precipitation a city which but a few hours before was ready to acknowledge them as masters.\*

Towards the evening of the following day, old Andrew Doria returned to Genoa, where his name was shouted as loudly as that of Fiesco and Liberty had been so short a time before. The punishments he inflicted were moderate, although his humiliation and wrongs were fresh in his mind, and the disfigured corpse of his grand-nephew, the prop of his old age, was before his eyes. They fell principally upon the family of the Fieschi, whose property was all confiscated,—the splendid palace of the Count was razed to the ground, and his brother Girolamo being soon after taken, was executed with two others.

Bernardino, whom we left in no enviable situation, was not liberated by the bravoës until the Senate had obtained the upper hand. In spite of his vices, he grieved for the death of his friend; and a few months after showed the durability and disinterestedness of his attachment, by marrying the Lady Emilie, who was now fortuneless.

Muratori, *Annali*.    Robertson, *Hist.* Charles V.





## HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

### Seventeenth Century.

No signal revolution occurred in Italy during the whole course of this century. Submission to despotism had been confirmed into a habit ; the cruelties and crimes that had almost always accompanied the struggles of the Italians were succeeded by milder vices.

The princes of the little states slumbered on their thrones, or contented themselves with an attention to the fine arts ; those of Savoy, who wielded the sceptre of Piedmont, were the only exceptions. They extended their dominions and their influence, though perhaps not by means favourable to the Italians.

This ignoble state of things was not, however, unaccompanied by bickerings and jealousies, foreign quarrels and intrigues : these, indeed, are too disgustingly numerous to mention ; but a few dates will serve to mark the really important events.

1618.—The famous conspiracy at Venice, which Otway has rendered so familiar to the English reader, took place.

1625.—Genoa was besieged by a French army of 30,000 men ; but with the assistance of the Spaniards, successfully defended herself.

1626.—The Duchy of Urbino was annexed to the Papal States, and its industry and prosperity, for which it had long been remarkable, were blighted.

1627.—A disputed succession to the Duchy of Mantua involved all Lombardy in troubles ; the Imperialists, the Spaniards, the French, and the troops of Savoy, played their mischievous pranks on the ancient theatre of so many sanguinary wars, but seldom penetrated beyond the northern provinces of Italy.

1631.—The peace of Chierasco concluded the war of the Mantuan succession.

1639.—A civil war, aggravated by the interference of the French and Spaniards, was carried on in Savoy and Piedmont.

1645.—The Turks made an unexpected and unprovoked attack on the Venetians by laying siege to Candia, which was nobly defended for even a longer period than that of the siege of old Troy.

1647.—Witnessed the extraordinary insurrection of the Neapolitans under the fisherman Masaniello.

1660.—Louis XIV. quarrelled with the Pope Alexander VII., about an affray that took place at Rome through the arrogance of his ambassador, the Duc de Crequi.

1664.—The Pope had the mortification of being obliged to submit to the terms of accommodation which Louis XIV. imperiously dictated ; the final and most humiliating of these conditions was, that the Pope should send a member of his own family to Paris to make his apologies. These conditions were not only subscribed to, but rigorously enforced. Hitherto the Papal legates had appeared at the courts of Europe only to give laws and impose contributions: Cardinal Ghigi was the first despatched to any monarch to demand pardon for the Holy See.

1669.—The whole of the island of Candia, except two or three ports, was finally surrendered to the Turks by the Venetians, after a war in which 120,000 Mussulmans and 30,000 Christians are said to have perished.

1672.—A war broke out between the Republic of Genoa and the Duchy of Savoy. It ended without any important results ; and during the remainder of the seventeenth century the Oligarchy had no enemy to contend with except Louis XIV., who, in 1684, quarrelling with them about the port of Savona, sent a powerful naval armament to Genoa, which was bombarded, and compelled to make submission.

1674.—Several attempts had been made in Sicily to shake off the Spanish yoke ; but this year the people of Messina, despairing of defending their rights without assistance, had recourse to Louis XIV., whom they tempted with the offer of the sovereignty of their city, and the eventual union of their whole island with the French dominions. Louis gladly closed with their proposals ; he was proclaimed King of Sicily at Messina, and despatched a small squadron to take possession of the city in his name.

1678.—Louis XIV. basely abandoned the people of Messina, giving them up to their former masters, the insulted and vindictive Spaniards, who punished them in a most merciless manner.

1684.—Venice, which alone of the Italian States retained its energies, in concert with the Empire, entered on another war against the Turks. The Lion of Saint Mark again triumphed most gloriously in the fight : the island of Santa Maura, one of the keys of the Adriatic Gulf, was reduced ; continental Greece was invaded, and in three years Francesco Morosini, who had so gallantly defended Candia, having taken Modon, Argos, Napoli di Romania, and Corinth, and planted the banner of the Republic upon the smoking ruins of Athens, finally consummated the bold design he had cherished, of wresting the whole of the Morea from the Infidels.

1687.—Declining in her literature, Italy however, always foremost in some department of study, cultivated the natural sciences with brilliant success ; and besides Torricelli, Gianalfonso Borelli, Il Padre Castelli, Domenico Guglielmini, the great astronomer Cassini, the seventeenth century could boast of the more valuable part of the labours of the "starry Galileo."

## The Fisherman's Rebellion.\*

O ! Pescator dell' onda !

*Venetian Barcarole.*

UNDER the government of the Spanish Viceroy, the Duke d'Arcos, the Neapolitan people were condemned to feel in all its force, the oppressive influence of foreign dominion ; their wealth was drained away by frequent impositions, which notwithstanding the privileges granted by the Emperor Charles V. to his "Fedelissimo Popolo Napolitano," had continually increased from his time ; and the numerous levies, when aggregated, made indeed a frightful mass. The government also extorted large sums every year from this impoverished nation, to send to their master the Spanish monarch, under the specious title of presents. These were much like the gifts which our Henry VIII. obtained from his terrified Parliament. As the wants of the Spanish nation increased, the Neapolitans became utterly impoverished ; † but the sapient viceroys made no account of the wretchedness of the people, and determined to struggle with them to the division of the last ducat.

\* The whole of the following notices have been taken from a very scarce and curious work, written by a priest who was an eye-witness to the principal facts, and published in the year after their occurrence. I met with the book by chance in an obscure bookseller's shop at Naples ; and, struck by its manner no less than by its matter, I purchased it.—M.

† In nineteen years, namely, from 1628 to 1647, these donativi to Philip III. and Philip IV. amounted to 100,000,000 ducats.

Nearly every necessary of life was already grievously taxed ; the price of bread was trebled, and there was scarcely any money in circulation. In 1646, the government, wishing to make a fresh donation, imposed a new gabella, or duty, on all fruits and vegetables : this was, as it were, taking away the very staff of life from the lower classes of that crowded city. Numbers of them consequently perished for want, or languished in the midst of plenty, for nature was still as kind and productive as ever. The patience and forbearance of the people were at length exhausted ; and they were ready to make any effort to relieve themselves from such intolerable suffering. "*Ad extremum sunt Populi exitium, cum extrema onera eis imponuntur,*" as my chronicler observes from Tacitus. As yet, however, no one offered himself as leader ; and their only efforts were prayers, supplications, and tears, poured out to the Viceroy whenever he appeared abroad, but which he heard, saw, and forgot. From prayers they proceeded to menaces ; and one Saturday, as he was proceeding to celebrate a religious festival at the church of La Madonna del Carmine, they so beset and terrified his Excellency that, from pure fear, he gave them his promise to take away entirely the detested gabella. There was no appearance that this promise would be performed, the rage and indignation of the people increased, and, just at this period they heard of a public tumult and struggle in Sicily, by means of which the Sicilians had entirely shaken off the burdensome imposition. This inspired them with envy and courage to do the like ; and Naples became a scene of discord and fury. The Viceroy began to feel the most serious alarm, and would perhaps have willingly abolished the tax ; but some of the wealthy inhabitants of Naples had at various times advanced money to the government, and by that means had become the proprietors of the impost. The interests of these persons were manifestly opposed to the interests of the people ; and the Viceroy could only propose to dispense with the gabella on fruits and vegetables, by laying another duty equivalent to it on corn and oil. These articles already laboured under an insupportable burden, and such a proposition, therefore, matured and added vigour to

the disaffection of the people. They now only wanted a leader; this leader was soon found—but let me introduce him in my author's own words:—

“ In the Quartiere del Mercato \* of Naples, there dwelt a young man ; he was twenty-four years old, and married ; full of wit and drollery ; of a middling stature, and rather thin than fat ; his eyes were black ; he had two little brown moustachios ; he wore neither shoes nor stockings ; his dress was composed of short linen trousers, a thick shirt, and a sailor's red cap on his head ; but his aspect was beautiful and animated, and as vivacious as possible, and this has been shown by the effects. His business was to catch little fish with a rod and line, and to buy fish and carry them to sell in some part of his quarter of the town, which business is in Naples called Pescivendali. His name was Tomaso Anello d'Amalfi ; in the Neapolitan idiom called Mas' Aniello.”

This was just the man to lead the fishermen and lazzaroni of Naples ; a philosophic patriot would never have gained their hearts ; and, besides, there were certain circumstances and superstitions connected with this person which assured them of success. Beneath the window of a house in which he dwelt was an old fountain, ornamented with the name and arms of the imperial benefactor of Naples, Charles V.—and Mas' Aniello (perhaps he knew not why) had been accustomed to say, in his joking humours, that he was destined to restore and renew in his city the favours and privileges granted to it by the benignity of that august monarch. A coincidence of names, however, had more effect on the mind of the populace. A hundred years precisely had now elapsed since a rising took place in Naples, to resist the introduction of the tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, which the bigoted Philip II. wished to establish in the year 1547 ; and this tumult was headed by a person of the name of Mas' Aniello, a native of the Sorrentine coast.

At the time when the Viceroy proposed to substitute a duty on

\* The residence of the lowest orders of the Neapolitan populace, somewhat like our Wapping or St. Giles's.

corn and oil, in lieu of the gabella on fruits and vegetables, Mas' Aniello's fish were taken from him in the market-place ; the alleged reason being that he had not paid the duty. Full of rage, he hurried away, at the moment of this insult, to a church in the neighbourhood of his residence, where Perrone, a celebrated captain of banditti, had, with one of his companions, taken refuge. When these men, observing the disturbed appearance of our fisherman, asked him, what ailed him ? Mas' Aniello answered furiously, "that he would either be hung, or set the city to rights." At this they laughed, but Mas' Aniello was not a man to be trifled with : "Do not laugh," said he ; "had I two or three of my humour, by heaven I would show what I could do !"—"What, what would you do ?" cried they. "Will you be with me ?" said Mas' Aniello.—"And why not ?" answered they. "Pledge me then your faith, and you shall soon see what you have to do." They pledged their faith, and Mas' Aniello departed.

Leaving the church, he went round to all the fruit-sellers in the neighbourhood, and earnestly begged them to meet in the market-place, and to declare with united voices, that they would no longer continue their trade in fruit while the gabella continued. On the following day they nearly all assembled, but the representative of the city being informed of their intentions, and fearing a tumult, went in person to the market, and made a verbal concession, which induced the mob to retire. Mas' Aniello, though disappointed this time, was not disheartened ; he continued to go round the city, exclaiming, "Down with the gabella !" Numbers naturally collected around him ; and from these he selected a great many children, whom he thus instructed ; "Say as I say. Let oil be sold at a bajocco the measure ; meat at six grains the rotolo ; cheese at twenty-two grains the rotolo ; wine at two grains the bottle," &c.\* When they had well learnt this lesson, he sent them to cry it all over Naples, and even in the face of the Viceroy.

My author here makes the following observation : "At present

\* A bajocco is about a farthing English. A grain is rather less than a half-penny. A rotolo is about thirty ounces.

we pay exactly those prices which Mas' Aniello taught the children to demand."

Many people ridiculed Mas' Aniello, and sought to make him abandon his scheme ; but he replied to them, " Let me alone ; let me go on, and you will see the event ;" and, in fact, in a short time, he had enlisted in his puerile troops above two thousand youths, and had armed them with sticks. On the 7th of July, it is usual to celebrate a festival\* in the Chapel of St. Maria della Grazia, situated in the market. This festival is commonly attended by an immense number of young persons ; who were accustomed, when the religious part of the ceremony was over, to amuse themselves by attacking with sticks, and fruit converted into missiles, a little wooden castle, which was built for the purpose. The moment arrived, but in the place where their ammunition was usually lying in heaps on the ground, there was now nothing but a little stale fruit, which had been left unsold on the preceding day. A riot took place in consequence, the gabella being considered the cause of this disappointment. The representative of the city again made his appearance, but this time he got seriously pelted, and was compelled to retreat to the Church del Carmine.

The mob continued to increase ; the spacious Piazza del Mercato was crowded, and on all sides there were heard cries of " Long live the King of Spain, and perish the bad government !" Mas' Aniello added to the strength of his troop, by distributing among them iron pikes, pieces of paling, and other weapons, which they took from the fortifications of the Carmine. He then jumped on a high table, which was in the market-place, and addressed the populace. As his speech was extremely characteristic, it may be as well to give it in the words of my author.

" Joy, dear companions and brothers ! Give thanks to God, and to the glorious Virgin of the Carmine, for the hour which has now arrived of your deliverance. This poor unshod man, (himself,) like a new Moses, who saved the children of Israel, will

\* This festival is still continued.

redeem you from the burden of the gabella, newly imposed ; and from the tyranny and insatiable avarice of strangers, which have eternally oppressed you. A fisherman—for such was Peter—delivered from the slavery of Satan, and placed in the liberty of Christ, a Rome—and with Rome, a world : and another fisherman, who is Mas' Aniello, will, in the place of rigorous exactions, give you the entire enjoyment of the original abundance of Naples, and of the kingdom. From this day you will be free from the yoke which has weighed you down. For myself I care not ; I may be torn to pieces ; my head may be cut from my body with a sharp iron, and may be raised up in this piazza as the leader of a revolution ; but I shall die contented and glorious, assured that my blood and my life have been useful to my country."

This speech inflamed the minds of the people, who were indeed already fully disposed to undertake anything their favourite might suggest. Then, "for a beginning," as my author says, they set fire to the office of the gabella, which was in the market-place, and burnt it to ashes, with all the books, writings, and furniture which it contained. This being performed, they walked forward into the body of the city ; and as they proceeded, their numbers rapidly and powerfully increased. They spread themselves into the different quarters of the town, and set fire to every office of customs, burning, as before, everything within, not preserving even the arms ; and leaving untouched large quantities of money which had been deposited in those places. "Looking upon these things," says my author, "as the quintessence of their blood, they consecrated them indiscriminately to the fury of the flames." When they arrived at the palace, and mustered under the windows of the Viceroy, their number was above ten thousand. This immense multitude now demanded to be relieved, not only from the gabella on fruit, but from every other heavy tax, and especially from the imposition on corn. His Excellency, exceedingly alarmed by their numbers and clamour, presented himself at a balcony, and solemnly assured them they should be satisfied ; that the gabella on fruit should be entirely taken off, and a part of that on the corn. But the time had come when the people were no longer



to be appeased. The cry was general, "Long live the King of Spain, and perish, perish the bad government!"—and now, declaring their determination to be relieved from all gabelle, they rushed forward in thousands to force their way into the palace, and to speak to the Viceroy face to face. The Spanish and German guard could not resist the pressure of the angry multitude, but were soon put to flight, and crowds entered the palace. When they reached the door of his Excellency's apartment, finding it well secured within, they began, with pikes and various arms, which they had taken from the soldiers, to force an entrance. The Viceroy, thus exposed to imminent danger, attempted to fly to the neighbouring Church of San Luigi de' Padri; but before he departed, he addressed the people from a balcony, and threw papers among them, signed by his own hand, which had the royal seal attached to them; in which the duty on fruit was removed, and that on corn reduced. The people, however, still demanded that he should descend to speak to them, *faccia a faccia*; and, as he endeavoured to pass unnoticed to the church, he was discovered by the mob—some of the principals of whom entered his carriage with drawn swords, and with dreadful threats insisted on his yielding to their demands. Fearing for his life, his Excellency gave them his sacred promise that all the obnoxious taxes should be removed. No sooner did the populace hear this, than their revilings and threats were changed into shouts of applause, and protestations of gratitude. They called the Viceroy their saviour, and kissed his hands with respect; some prostrated themselves on the earth, and others embraced his knees. At this moment his Excellency scattered some hundreds of sequins among them, which he had brought for that purpose; and when numbers of them pressed forward, anxious to collect the glittering coin, their ruler, with a considerable quantity of Spanish cavaliers and soldiers, fled into the church, which was now close at hand.

Indignant at this escape, the mob were proceeding to extremities with the church. They had broken down the outer gate, and had nearly effected an entrance, when the Cardinal Filomarino, archbishop of the city, a personage venerated by the populace,

arrived at the spot, and endeavoured to appease the tumult. A calm of a few moments succeeded his arrival; the Archbishop descended from his carriage, and placed himself before the inner door of the church; no one then offered to strike another blow, but all besought their beloved pastor to unite his endeavours with theirs, in order to obtain relief from their miseries. Another paper, signed by the Viceroy, was put into the hands of the Archbishop; upon receiving which he ascended his carriage, and holding it up as a lure to the people, proceeded along the street Toledo, drawing the chief part of the mob after him. But their rage and disappointment knew no bounds when the Archbishop read this document, for it was found to fall far short of their demands, and of the promises of the Viceroy when he was in their power. They returned to attack the Church; but his Excellency got over the walls into another religious house, and then putting himself into an old sedan chair which was found there, he was carried by some of his Spanish attendants to the Castle of Sant' Elmo.

When it was found that the Viceroy had escaped from the convent, the people divided into many parties, and ran through every part of the city, burning obnoxious houses, forcing the arms from the soldiers, and breaking open all the prisons, except three, which they respected on account of being royal prisons. The Prince of Bisignano, a nobleman of distinction, and a great and old favourite of the people, hoped, by placing himself at their head, to prevent, in some measure, the dreadful ravages they were committing; but on making the attempt, he found that all his efforts were fruitless, and he retired. The people then declared Mas' Aniello their chief, leader, and captain. "The scene that ensued," says my author, "was so dreadful, that I cannot think of it without trembling. The loud bells of the city were ringing to arms; the blast of trumpets, the rolling of drums, the discharge of musquetry, and the tumultuous shouts of the people, resounded on every side."

On the approach of night the tumult was so dreadful, that some of the religious orders issued in procession, to restrain the rage of the people, and to implore the divine assistance. Two hours after sunset, the Viceroy, escorted by a strong troop, passed with all

possible secrecy from the Castle of Sant' Elmo to the Castel Nuovo, which he surrounded with the most numerous and best appointed part of his soldiers. He then published another conciliatory proclamation, which, however, produced no effect. By the orders of Mas' Aniello, many parties were now put on guard to prevent a surprise from the military.

On the next morning similar scenes of confusion took place, but the people were highly gratified on observing that fruit was sold in immense quantities in the market without gabella, and that the weight of the loaf was increased from twenty-two to thirty-two ounces. The Viceroy sent a deputation to wait on Mas' Aniello, informing him that all he had asked was granted. This declaration came too late; the people had discovered their strength, and now insisted on a renewal of all the privileges granted to them by the Emperor Charles V. : they even demanded that the castle of Sant' Elmo should be given into their hands. His Excellency sent another deputation, composed of the chief of the Neapolitan nobility, but to these the people returned a similar answer, still insisting on a renewal of their privileges; especially demanding, that in future no gabella should be levied without the consent of the representative of the city, and the concurrence and approbation of the Church of Rome.

The Viceroy, having failed in all his measures hitherto, now had recourse to superstition for help: he gave the Archbishop directions to administer the sacrament in all the churches, and to exhibit the miraculous blood and the sacred head of the glorious Protector of Naples, San Gennaro: but this also failed of effect, for the people immediately expressed their conviction that San Gennaro *was for them*—"he is on *our side!*" was the cry.

The persons of greatest weight, after Mas' Aniello, were the bandit Perrone, before-mentioned, and an old priest, named Giulio Genovino, who had been the representative of the people in the time of the Duca Ossuna, and who had long been their sturdy defender, and a sufferer in their cause. These two drew up a list of more than sixty persons, who had derived a profit from farming the gabella, and the multitude had orders to proceed against them,

to burn or destroy everything which they possessed ; but on no account to appropriate to their own use anything which might be found. Several of the mob were very properly executed for disobeying their orders in the last particular : and now those who had been unmerciful and grasping in their exactions, “ had their blood lavished like water, as a punishment for their avarice and cruelty.” Mas’ Aniello now gave orders that every person who had arms or ammunition should deliver them up for the defence of the city ; by this means, a great number of carbines, musquets, and arquebuses, were obtained. In the house of a Genevese army contractor they found 4000 musquets ; and from the house of a merchant they took nine pieces of cannon ; nine others they took from two armed vessels ; and all these they planted at the entrances of the principal streets of the city.

In the evening, the Archbishop had again recourse to processions ; but Mas’ Aniello told him, that, although he was very grateful to him for the holy trouble which he took, he must beg that, for the future, the priests should be kept within doors ; as, otherwise, those venerable men might meet with very unpleasant accidents in the present disorderly condition of the people. At the same time, he would be most happy, he said, that they should continue their prayers and supplications for the peace and happiness of the city, *in their respective sanctuaries*. The Archbishop thought it would be well to comply with such reasonable advice ; and accordingly prayers were put up in the churches from that time, until the period of Mas’ Aniello’s death. The next day, the same confusion prevailed ; but one thing deserves particular remark : in the house of one of those persons, who had become obnoxious to public resentment, two little barrels of sequins were found ;—these the mob immediately deposited in the royal bank, for the use of the King ! It chanced that the original charter of two of the most important privileges granted to the city of Naples by Charles and Ferdinand fell into their hands ; these they sent to the Castel Nuovo, in order that they might be signed and acknowledged by the Viceroy ; but when, after waiting patiently for some hours, they saw no symptoms of compliance and had even

reason to fear that they should not recover the charters themselves, they resolved to obtain possession of the Torre del Campanile, a place of some strength, defended by about sixty Spanish soldiers ; and also of the Church of San Lorenzo, in which the archives of the city were deposited. About ten thousand persons instantly employed themselves in these undertakings : they soon compelled the soldiers to capitulate ; and with the two places they obtained about eighteen pieces of cannon, which were distributed by Mas' Aniello, so as to defend his party, in the most important points : he then ordered the prisoners to be well fed, and set at liberty.

It was observed that, among the most active of the combatants, and in the most awful scenes of destruction, many women, and even children, appeared ; of whom some fought in the ranks, and others supplied the men with ammunition.

The viceroy was shut up in the castle, without provisions ; a felucca, which he sent to the opposite coast for supplies, fell into the hands of the people ; and he was thus reduced to a state of utter weakness and despair. He was consequently obliged to put the charter of the privilege granted by Charles V., accompanied with a promise, written in his own hand, to observe every article which it contained, into the hands of the Archbishop, who was despatched to the Piazza del Mercato, to treat with the people. When the Archbishop read this instrument, and the annexed promise, a sentiment of joy diffused itself among the people ; but it soon gave place to distrust and suspicion. With loud cries they reviled and threatened the sacred ambassador for endeavouring to deceive them with a falsified copy of the charter. His Eminence, finding himself in danger, addressed himself, with great affability, to Mas' Aniello, requesting to know the cause of this sudden disturbance. Mas' Aniello replied, " They say your Eminence wishes to betray us ; but I, who know your Eminence's virtues, will believe no such thing, but will defend you against their fury at the expense of my life ; therefore do not fear ! " It was soon agreed, that the Archbishop should deliver the documents into the hands of some person of the popular party who was capable of judging of their authenticity. The priest Giulio

Genovino was the one fixed upon : the examination, which lasted all night, was carried on in the presence of the Archbishop, Mas' Aniello, and several others ; and in the morning the papers were declared to be valid. But the people, however glad to receive the charter, were still distrustful, and would place no faith in the promises of the Viceroy. They were, moreover, in great wrath respecting a certain passage in his declaration, in which he assured them he would procure his Majesty's pardon for the acts of rebellion which they had committed. "We have been guilty of no rebellion," cried they : "we are all most faithful vassals of the King ; we have risen only to obtain the privileges which were granted to us by his Majesty's glorious predecessors, Charles and Ferdinand." The Archbishop, seeing that the hour of pacification had not yet arrived, retired to his palace, and the people, considering themselves insulted and betrayed, determined to proceed to extremities. On the same day, some considerable bodies of Spanish and German troops marched upon the city from the neighbouring garrisons, but were all overpowered and disarmed, and the people remained undisputed masters of the metropolis. About noon, Mas' Aniello issued an order, that wherever the portraits of the King and Queen of Spain were found, they should be put out of the windows of the house, under rich canopies, and that the arms of the people should be piled beneath them.

Another negotiation was begun the next day, by the Archbishop, in the Church del Carmine ; but it was interrupted in a very tragical manner. More than five hundred banditti, who had been collected together by Perrone, Mas' Aniello's associate, entered the city by the gate Del Carmine, saying they had come for the service of the people : they were well mounted and armed, The shrewd and active Mas' Aniello was not long in making important discoveries : Perrone was found to be a traitor, and in fact seven arquebuses were fired at Mas' Aniello while he was conversing with Perrone upon the best method of disposing of the troops, although he was then standing on sacred ground, and in the midst of ten thousand people ; "but," says my priest, "he was not wounded,

and some balls which struck on the bosom of his shirt fell to the ground, without doing him any harm ; which circumstance was considered as a miracle performed in his favour by the Madonna del Carmine, whose portrait hung at his breast." The people immediately attacked those traitors, and a dreadful slaughter ensued ; their blood flowed in streams before the grand altar, in the sacristy, and at the very feet of the Archbishop. Perrone was taken alive by Mas' Aniello ; and on being put to the torture, he confessed that he and his troop had been employed by the Duke of Mattaloni to kill not only the fisherman and his associates, but also, by a mine which was already dug and charged with twenty-eight barrels of gunpowder, to blow up all that part of the city, and even the Convent del Carmine, under which building there was another mine well supplied. For this massacre and destruction, when accomplished, he was to receive the sum of 15,000 scudi ; a promissory note for that amount, given by the Duke, was found on his person. After this confession, he and his brother were beheaded ; and their heads, stuck upon poles, were exhibited in the market-place.

Among the banditti taken alive was one who, on being led out to execution, offered, on condition that his life was spared, to reveal plots of still greater horror and magnitude than those which had been confessed. The condition was agreed to, and he disclosed that on the following night numerous troops of horse were to have come and joined the five hundred banditti already mentioned, and by their united operations not only the above mines were to have been fired, but also others of enormous extent, (under the Piazza del Mercato,) which contained in the whole above fifteen thousand pounds of powder. The moment of explosion was fixed at *tre ore di notte* ; when the greatest number of the people would be assembled together, according to the orders of Mas' Aniello, to guard against any nocturnal assault. " If," says my author, with admirable *sang-froid*, " this scheme had succeeded, about a hundred and fifty thousand persons, men, women, and children, would have been blown into the air, besides the numerous edifices, sacred and profane, situated thereabout."

Mas' Aniello immediately ordered that the places should be explored ; the plan, he said, was too infernal for conception ; but all that had been asserted was verified by the search. From another bandit it was learned that the reservoirs and canals, which supplied the most populous part of the city with water, were to be poisoned ; and, on examination, some of them were found to be already vitiated.

The horrid rage, and the dreadful thirst for vengeance, occasioned by the discovery of these plots, may be imagined. The people ran like furies to revenge themselves on their enemies, and retaliated on them with a remorseless and indiscriminating barbarity. The Duke of Mattaloni had taken refuge in the church of Sant' Efremo ; but no place, however holy, could give sanctuary to such an enemy, or arrest for a moment the deadly wrath of the populace. They broke its ponderous doors to splinters, and, rushing in, sought in every corner for the object of their hate. The Duke, however, had the good fortune to escape out of the convent ; he hurried through the city in the dress of a Capuchin friar, got to one of the barriers, where a swift steed awaited him, and vaulting into the saddle, galloped off with the utmost speed towards Benevento. A cruel fate, however, awaited his brother, who had taken refuge in the monastery of Santa Maria della Nova : he fell into the hands of the people, and was dragged to the Piazza del Ceriglio ; all his prayers for mercy, and all his offers of immense sums for the ransom of his life, were disregarded ;—a young butcher cut off his head with a large knife.

The people, suspecting the Viceroy to have been deeply engaged in those plots, determined to treat him without any ceremony : he was already deprived of provisions ; they now cut off the aqueducts which supplied the castle with water. His Excellency, in this terrible situation, wrote a letter to the Archbishop, begging him to treat again with the people, and to say that he (the Viceroy) solemnly swore to deliver up every one of the conspirators that might fall into his hands : but this assertion did not entirely remove the suspicions of the people. Mas' Aniello now became more than ever the object of popular adoration ; he had but to give orders



and thousands rushed to obey them : he directed that the whole city should remain under arms, to prevent a surprise from the banditti, who had joined themselves with some Spanish and German troops ; and he used every precaution which the most consummate talent and prudence could have suggested. He proclaimed the Duke of Mattaloni a traitor to his king and country ; and offered a reward of thirty thousand scudi to any person who should produce him dead or alive ; and then, despatching thousands of desperate characters, among whom was one of his brothers, in search of their intended victim, the Duke, he concluded the important business of this day.

My author begins his account of the fifth day of the tumult by expressing his surprise that "so much could be effected by a poor fisher-boy, and that such multitudes of armed and irritated people could proceed in such good order under his command, injuring none but those who had oppressed and had sought to betray and destroy them, and, in this up-turning of right and property, without appropriating anything to their individual advantage."

The first order issued on this day was, that under pain of death, every man should lay aside his cloak, mantle, scarf, or any part of dress under which arms might be concealed. Here my author remarks, very seriously, that it was a most strange thing to see Dominicans and Carmelites, Canons, Jesuits, and all sorts of priests, even the bishops and archbishops, walking about stripped of the most important and sightly part of their apparel. This order extended to the women, who were directed to leave off their cloaks, aprons, &c., and to wear their petticoats shorter than usual ; so that if they carried arms beneath them, they might be detected with facility. The leader then turned his attention to the fortifying of the streets : he ordered trenches to be dug, and had his artillery mounted on carriages, that they might be moved with ease to any place of need ; he commanded the nobility and persons of property to deliver up all the arms and ammunition they had in their possession, and to send as many of their servants as they could spare to assist in the defence of the people. On

this morning Mas' Aniello also fixed the prices at which provisions were to be sold.

The Viceroy, despairing of effecting anything by other means, wrote to the Archbishop, and gave him full authority and competence to adjust a compromise with the people, on whatever conditions he might be able to obtain. The people asked nothing more, and would accept nothing less, than they already demanded ; the Archbishop acceded to everything, and the Viceroy signed the treaty on the terms proposed. About four o'clock the Cardinal Archbishop proceeded with his splendid suite to read the treaty in the Church del Carmine. Mas' Aniello stood near the Archbishop while it was read. He had worn until now his fisherman's dress, but to-day he appeared in a rich habit covered with silver. When the reading was finished, the veteran patriot Genovino addressed the people from a pulpit, and desired them to return thanks to God, and the blessed Virgin del Carmine, for their deliverance : he then began to sing the *Te Deum*. A band of musical instruments, accompanied by the organ, performed that impressive anthem, and immense numbers of people joined in it with tears of gratitude.

Genevino must have felt much himself: he had been confined nineteen years in a wretched prison, for having been implicated in an attempt made during the government of the Duke of Ossuna to obtain the same privileges for which they had now been struggling ; and he was now eighty years old !

When the *Te Deum* was ended, Mas' Aniello mounted on a beautiful charger, and with a naked sword in his hand, preceded the carriage of the Archbishop towards the palace, where, according to agreement, he was to have an interview with the Viceroy. The numbers that followed him, and the shouts of applause and congratulation that rose on all sides were astonishing. When the procession arrived in the square before Castel Nuovo, just by the Fontana Medina, the captain of the Viceroy's guard advanced on horseback, but unarmed, to meet it. Saluting Mas' Aniello, he bade him welcome to the palace, where his Excellency (he said) with

great pleasure expected his arrival. Mas' Aniello returned his salutation with much gravity and decorum ; and then making signs to the people not to move a step more forward, and to remain silent, he stood up in his stirrups and addressed them, His speech is rather too long to be translated : he begins by congratulating the people on their happy deliverance, and then desires them to say after him who are their masters—" God ;" the people shouted, " God." " The Madonna del Carmine ;" " the Madonna del Carmine," cried they. " King Philip ; Cardinal Archbishop Filomarina ; the Duke of Arcos !" they in each case instantly echoed his words. He then drew from his breast the original charters granted by Ferdinand and Charles the Fifth, and signed by the Viceroy, the Duke of Arcos, and the council of state, continuing in a louder voice :

" Now we are free, and relieved from all the burdens that oppressed us. For myself, I pretend to nothing, and wish for nothing but your good ; and this his Eminence the Archbishop (who offered me two hundred dollars per month for life, provided I left your cause and proceeded no farther) well knows. I should never have quitted my poor sailor's rags, even for a moment, had I not been compelled to do so by the Archbishop, under pain of precept, and the thunder of excommunication. Having fished up the public liberty out of the stormy sea of this afflicted city, I shall return to fish, and sell my fish as before, not reserving for myself or my house so much as a rag of cloth. The only thing I beg of you is, that when I am dead, and gone from among you, you will everyone of you say an Ave Maria for the peace of my soul ; say, will you promise me this ?—will you not ?—will you not ?"

It would be difficult to match the pathetic eloquence of this address by anything that history records ; and its dignity is equal to its pathos. The people shouted " they would—they would !" but hoped the masses would not be needed for a hundred years to come. Mas' Aniello then advised them not to lay down their arms until they received a confirmation of their privileges and their treaty from the King of Spain ; and by no means to trust the nobles, who were traitors and enemies to the people. " On this

subject," adds my author, "he dwelt a long time, and used such irreverent language, that out of decency I do not repeat his words." He then added, "I am going to negotiate with his Excellency: you will see me again in an hour, or at farthest by to-morrow morning; but if I am betrayed, and do not appear among you by that time, set fire to the whole city. Will you promise me this?" "Yes, yes!" shouted the populace, "and we will surely do it."

When Mas' Aniello had finished his address, he requested the Archbishop to bless the people: his Eminence readily complied, and putting his head out of the carriage, with two motions of the cross on each side, bestowed his pastoral benediction. Mas' Aniello then rode on, and entered the palace through a crowd of soldiers, followed by the Archbishop, who was accompanied in his carriage by Genovino, Mas' Aniello's brother, and Arpaja, the new *eletto* or representative of the people. They were met by the Viceroy at the foot of the great staircase: the Cardinal introduced Mas' Aniello, who threw himself at the feet of his Excellency, which he kissed in the name of the people, thanking him for the grace he had bestowed upon them, and assuring him that he might dispose of his life as he thought fit. The Viceroy with great cordiality assisted him to rise; told him he had never considered him as a criminal, and that he should for the future esteem him as a friend. "It is even asserted by some," says my author, with much caution, and a certain air of scepticism, "that his Excellency embraced the fisher-boy several times."

The Viceroy then retired, with Mas' Aniello and the Archbishop, to a private apartment, where they remained a considerable time, reasoning together on the affairs of the city. While there, they heard a dreadful noise from the people without, who, alarmed at Mas' Aniello's long stay, began to suspect that some harm had befallen him. To remove this suspicion he appeared at a balcony, accompanied by the Viceroy and the Cardinal, and holding out his hand, cried aloud, "Here I am, safe and free! Peace, peace!"

The populace joyfully echoed the word Peace, and the bells of

the neighbouring churches began to ring ; but on Mas' Aniello's complaining of this, they were immediately silenced. To show the Viceroy the absolute command which he had over the people, he gave several extraordinary proofs of it ; a word, the finger pressed on the lips, the least gesture, was enough to produce the most unanimous and instantaneous obedience.

It was agreed at this interview that the treaty should be printed, and that the Viceroy and his ministers should, on the next Saturday, go in person to the Cathedral, and, after it was read, solemnly swear to observe every article which it contained, and to use all their efforts to have it confirmed by the King. The Viceroy gave orders to the Commissary-general to obey Mas' Aniello, who was now created Captain-general of the city, in all things ; and when Mas' Aniello took leave, his Excellency gave the powerful plebeian a rich gold chain worth 3,000 scudi. Mas' Aniello would have refused this last compliment, but the Archbishop insisted on his accepting of it. The next morning Mas' Aniello appeared in public, giving orders, and passing judgment in his usual sailor's dress. As a judge, he was violent, but seldom unjust ; he frequently exhibited great perspicacity ; and he was not unfrequently mild and merciful ; excepting always when the friends or family of Mattaloni were concerned, in which case he was uniformly severe. He sent the Viceroy a plentiful supply of provisions, and placed immense sums, which had fallen into his hands, in the royal treasury. The Viceroy and his wife sent, in return, many costly presents, such as rich robes and gold chains : "a circumstance," says my author, "which in future ages will scarcely be believed, but which is yet most historically true." On the next day, which was the Saturday appointed, the treaty was read in great form by the Secretary-general of the Neapolitan nation : the Viceroy and his ministers swore to observe it, and to procure its confirmation from his Majesty the King of Spain ; after which the *Te Deum* was sung, and then Mas' Aniello began a long speech, in which he declared the uprightness of his intentions, and mentioned his determination of returning to his original occupation as soon as the confirmation

should arrive from Spain ; but till then he was resolved to keep all the power which he had obtained. Printed copies of the treaty were posted up in all the public places in the city. The joy of the people was excessive, and with the imprudence natural to an unthinking mob, they would have thrown aside their weapons, but this Mas' Aniello strictly prohibited, commanding every man to be in arms, as before, for the public safety.

From 'his day, the glory of Mas' Aniello grew dim : he began to feel the intoxicating nature of his situation : his head seemed to turn giddy, and his prudence forsook him : his orders, no longer wise and decisive, were frequently countermanded ; from a firm but humble democrat, he became all at once a fierce and imperious tyrant. His judgments were generally capricious and bloody ; in short, he seemed no longer the same man, and even his brother-in-law was heard to say, that Mas' Aniello had gone mad ; and that, if he did not desist from so many executions and conflagrations, he would himself assassinate him. On Sunday evening Mas' Aniello appeared to be completely delirious ; all his words and actions were those of a madman : here my author says "it was the opinion of most people that his intellects had been deranged by a drugged liquor, given him for that purpose by the Viceroy." On Monday, the mad tricks he played had in them much of the comic and ridiculous, but more of the frightful and tragical. Heads were stuck off in dozens at his approach ; he treated the first noblemen of the land with the greatest indignity, and quarrelled with, and even beat, his coadjutors, the able Arpaja and the venerable Genovino. In the evening, he complained of a dreadful pain in his head, saying a fire was burning in his brain, and he threw himself, dressed as he was, into the sea ; when he came out he was secured, put in irons, and conducted to his house. On the same evening, Genovino and Arpaja, despairing of his recovery, entirely abandoned him, and retiring to the Castel Nuovo concerted a plan with the Viceroy to deprive Mas' Aniello of his power, and to make him prisoner for life. Before they proceeded to attempt at alienating the people from him, they stipulated that his life should be spared on account of the good he had

done, and that the treaty which he had made should be punctually observed.

The next morning was the festival of the Virgin of Carmine: Mas' Aniello, who had just broken loose from his irons, entered that crowded church a few minutes before the Archbishop, who was on that day to celebrate grand mass. When the Archbishop entered, Mas' Aniello approached him, crying in a tone of despair, "I see the people begin to forsake me, and wish to betray me; be it so; I only desire for mine, for the people's consolation, that a solemn procession, in which the Viceroy, his ministers, and the authorities of the city may form a part, should be made on this day to the shrine of this most holy Virgin. Having to die, I shall in this manner die contentedly."

When the Cardinal was proceeding to perform the religious ceremonies, Mas' Aniello ascended a pulpit, and, taking a crucifix in his hand, conjured the people to remember all that he had done for them, and not to abandon him. He spoke for some time in a very sane manner, and seemed to have recovered his former eloquence and reason; but, on seeing the eyes of the people either averted, or turned on him with anger and contempt, and that even his body-guards were forsaking him, he lost all command of himself, and burst out into delirious ravings. The Cardinal, who was thus interrupted in his services, despatched some monks to make Mas' Aniello descend: he offered no resistance, indeed he was incapable of making any, for he had exhausted himself, and large drops of sweat were rolling down his face. By the order of the Archbishop he was carried to the dormitory of the monks and laid upon a bed.

The religious ceremonies were finished, and the Archbishop retired from the church to his palace. In the meantime Mas' Aniello, having changed his dress, which was wet with perspiration, went from the dormitory into a little saloon that had a balcony overlooking the sea; he was leaning over this to catch the cooling air, when some gentlemen, accompanied by a great number of armed men, entered the church, crying "Long live the King of Spain, and let no one, under pain of death, obey Mas'

Aniello any longer!" From the church they passed into the cloisters, pretending to wish to negotiate with Mas' Aniello. When he heard his name called, he came undauntedly forward to meet them, exclaiming, "Here I am my friends." In that moment four arquebuses, each loaded with ten square balls, were discharged at the fated victim, who, uttering the words, "ungrateful traitors!" rolled a corpse at the feet of his assassins. A butcher, who was passing by, was called in to cut off his head, which having placed on a spear, the murderers entered the church, where above eight thousand people were assembled, and thence they went into the market-place crying, "Mas' Aniello is dead, long live the King of Spain, and let no one mention the name of Mas' Aniello!"

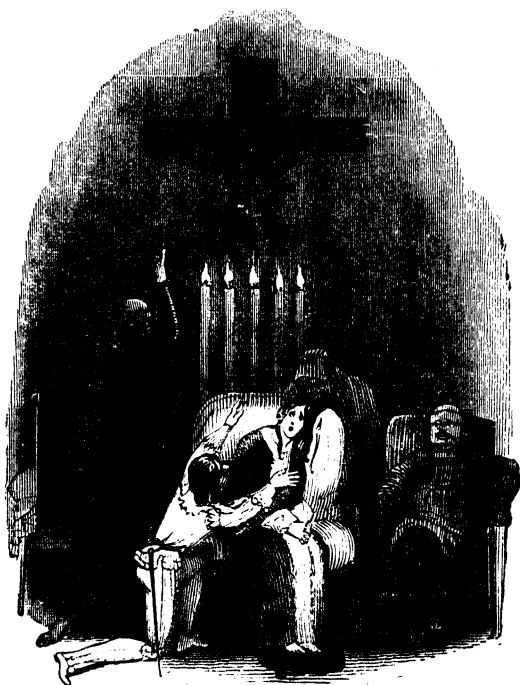
The spectacle of the bleeding head of their leader, and the discharge of a few arms without ball, were sufficient to disperse that mob which had for ten days been absolute masters of the city; they retired without so much as striking a blow to avenge the death of a man who had procured them such immense benefits.

The body of Mas' Aniello was thrown into one of the fosses of the city, and his brothers and sisters, wife, mother, and every relative, found in Naples, were taken prisoners, and confined in the castle: to ingratiate himself with the people, the Viceroy, however, very soon gave orders for their release.

On the evening of the same day in which Mas' Aniello was killed, the Viceroy had the privileges of Charles the Fifth again read with much solemnity in the market-place, and again swore strictly to observe every article of them, as well as of the treaty he had made. The people were contented, and in the cries of long live the King of Spain, and the Duke of Arcos, and with the prospect of cheap bread, fruit and oil, "forgot the ill-fated Mas' Aniello, almost before his body was cold."







## The Dominican.

### A STORY OF THE PLAGUE OF NAPLES.

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Fo voto a Dio, ch' egli se n' avrà a pentire. Se m' ajuti Iddio, come io gli farò vedere, quanto importa a far saltar la bile ai Frati.

*Il Matrimonio di Fra Giovanni, Atto i. Scena 8.*

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**D**URING a short repose from the calamities of famine, earthquakes, seditions, domestic and foreign wars, depredations of the piratical Turks, and the scarcely less formidable excursions of troops of banditti, which, all united, had for many months

afflicted the kingdom of Naples, a splendid festival was held in the large square before the palace, in the month of May 1656.

The Spanish Viceroy, Haro Count di Castrillo, and his court, presided with full Spanish state. The principal amusements of the day were a tourney and a bull fight ; for the Spaniards carried their tastes with them into Italy, and the Neapolitans have more than the ordinary aptitude of assuming the tastes of the conqueror or master. Many a gay Andalusian dress was flaunted that day in the honoured arena ; many a youthful eye was raised to the ladies on the surrounding seats, to read the effect of a fine figure on a bounding steed, of an expert pass, or of a hazardous exploit : there was a mighty driving of spurs, and pushing of horns and spears, a copious gushing of hot red blood, and the usual accompaniments of clapping hands and waving handkerchiefs.

Among the young heroes of the day there was one, who by the superior elegance of his equipments, the studied grace of his evolutions, and the boldness of his action, seemed bent on attracting marked attention ; and from the court balcony there was an eye that never took itself off him, and whose kindly glance might well be deemed deserving of his ambition. The Marchesa di —— was a young widow, rich, and full of grace and beauty. In the circle where she sat, were many dames, lofty in nobility, and in the consciousness of possessing real and visible claims to admiration and reverence ; but her tall elastic figure, arrayed in the purest fashion of the times, her exquisite features, the extraordinary delicacy of her complexion, and an expression of deep sensibility, which nothing diminished the dignity of her whole appearance, distinguished her from the rest ; and if her glances were reserved for one only of the combatants, they were sighed for by all. Filippetto, the young Count di ——, was her acknowledged lover ; and that his affection was returned nobody could doubt who saw that day, at the moment his temerity had placed him in peril, how she suppressed a scream, and hurried her long white hands over her eyes to conceal what she dreaded to see ; and how, when the plaudits of the multitude reassured her, she raised her pale

face, which quivered and glowed anon as she saw him in safety, looking up to her from the opposite side of the arena.

As soon as the cruel sports were over, and prizes had been awarded to such of the amateur performers as had distinguished themselves, Filipetto, preceded by a page, hastened to join his expecting mistress. In forcing his way through the crowd, he met with obstacles and delays, and more than one plebeian felt the application of his noble hand: at length he had forced his way over a deep order of benches, and was close to the court lodge, and within sight of the Marchesa; but here an unyielding group would pay no attention to the shrill "*Avanti! avanti!*" of the page, and the gigantic figure of a Dominican friar stood like a rock in his way. When the stripling touched the broad sleeve of his dress, to warn him of the approach of his Excellency the Count, he grasped him by the collar and shook him. Filipetto would readily have rewarded this insupportable insolence by attempting to hurl the monk into the arena, but the holy calling of the offender protected him; he, however, rudely rushed by, and nearly overturned him. The next moment he was leaning over his mistress's seat, without having observed the expression with which the Dominican resented his affront; and even had he seen it, he would have been far from suspecting it as the herald of the boundless wretchedness that was so soon to overwhelm him.

That night the gilded halls of the Viceroy resounded with music and dancing, and the jest and the careless laugh of gaiety: as though the revellers were aware they were taking a farewell of festivity, they plunged into it with unusual zest, and prolonged it until the risen sun shone on the white walls of the elevated monastery of San Martino. Many a dance was gone through that night by forms replete with youthful vigour, and buoyant with lightness of heart, that were never to dance again; many a sigh was poured out to forms that were to be in a few days objects of horror and dread—foul things, to be avoided as the ministers of death; many a plan was that night formed, never, never to be accomplished; and many a point of courtly etiquette between haughty nobles and presuming placemen was discussed for the last time.

But a few days after the fête, a report was made to the Viceroy that an alarming mortality prevailed in Naples.\* As the malady spread rapidly, and apparently by contagion, it was soon traced to the public hospital *dell' Annunziata*, where a soldier, lately landed from Sardinia, had died. As this man's body, after death, was covered with minute livid spots, and as all those who had assisted him had since been taken ill, it was naturally inferred that the plague had been introduced into the city. But the Viceroy, who dreaded such a sequel to the many miseries that had *illustrated* his government, flew into an extremity of rage, when this opinion was referred to him ; he threw a physician, who had the imprudent courage to tell him the truth, into a dungeon of the castle, and decided imperiously and absolutely, that there should be no plague in Naples.

The plague, however, it was, and in its very worst character, and already widely spread. A ship full of soldiers from Sardinia, where the plague was raging, although strict prohibitions existed against any communication with that island, was by some evasion, or for some urgent motive on the part of the government, admitted at once to *pratique*: the soldier that died in the hospital came from this vessel, and he was not the only one infected ; in fact, the destructive fire had been lighted at the same time in several of the lower quarters of the town.

The Archbishop of Naples, whose rank exempted him from danger in differing in opinion with the Viceroy, at length made a spirited remonstrance, and urged the necessity of precautionary decisions ; but the Count di Castrillo, who besides the reason above mentioned, dreaded the extension of such a belief, from the necessity of complying with the orders of his court to send a body of troops to strengthen the Spaniards against the French, in the Milanese, which operation would have been impeded by such rumours, still persisted that the malady was not the plague, and continued in his philosophic incredulity. Thus, owing to infatuation, or rather wilfulness, the contagion was extended over the provinces of the kingdom, and a dreadful process of extermination

commenced. Induced by popular complaint, the Viceroy called together the most reputed physicians of the time, to hold a consultation on the nature of the disease ; and these *peritissimi dottori*, either from ignorance or fear, or a desire of seconding the wishes of the Viceroy, did not declare the evil pestilential, and confined themselves to issuing a few regulations, some of which were unmeaning, and the whole inefficacious. The crowded city lost every day its hundreds ; and according to the Neapolitan historian Giannone, nothing was seen in the streets but melancholy processions, carrying the sacrament to the dying, or the dead to the sepulchre.

This pitiless destruction hurried the ignorant population to every excess of superstition : and the processions to venerated shrines, and the crowding after saints and madonnas, assisted the diffusion of the fatal malady. The evil was carried to its height by some fanatic or interested devotees, who seized that moment of affliction and weakness to rumour through the town that Suor Orsola Benincasa, a religious woman who had been dead some years, in her last sainted moments had prophesied that in a season of extreme calamity the Neapolitans would build a monastery for her sisters (who, woe the while ! had not as yet a comfortable dwelling,) on the side of the hill of San Martino, and thus avert from the city the scourging hand of Heaven. This consoling information was received with transport ; for the public mind was prepared for the reception of any absurdity in the shape of devotion ; and the Viceroy seemed not to be a whit more prudent or less superstitious than his subjects, for as soon as the design of the building was sketched, and the ground lines drawn, he carried with his own hands twelve baskets of earth, to contribute to the atoning edifice. Incited by their own frenetic superstition, and encouraged by the example of the head of the government, all classes hurried to contribute, not only money, but manual labour, to raise the monastery. Not boxes or baskets, but open casks were placed at the corner of the streets, to receive the contributions ; and many families despoiled themselves of the best part of their fortunes, to raise and endow this stone-and-mortar saviour

of their country. "But what excited the greatest surprise," says our historian, "was to see persons of quality, among whom were even ladies, in emulation of one another, mixing in the lowest labours; some carrying baskets of nails, some bundles of ropes, some barrels of lime, some loads of stones; some acting as labourers to the masons; some carrying on their shoulders heavy wooden beams, with the risk of sinking under their burdens." The consequences that ensued from this continual crowd, gathered from every part of the town, were terrible, but natural: the infection that had been hitherto excluded from some of the higher quarters, now spread over all: and as the holy Romitorio di Suor Orsola rose, the city sank faster and faster into the tomb.

Scarcely a family in Naples was exempted from the dreadful penalty, but on few did it fall more heavily than on the noble house of the Marchesa di ——. As they partook in the devotional spirit of the age and country, her father and brother had taken an active part in the building of Suor Orsola; the plague was communicated to them in the crowd—they died; and the youthful widow was left in the splendid palace, in the midst of diseased or raving attendants. The family of her lover, the Count di ——, had been wiser and more fortunate, for at the beginning of the mortality the father had closed up his house and secured it against all ingress. Their houses were opposite, and the two lovers, who could no longer meet, could still see each other from their balconies, and, as Neapolitan streets are not wide, even hold converse together. The scenes that passed in the street that separated them were replete with anguish and horror: poor houseless wretches were seen from time to time dropping dead, or stretched under gateways shrieking in torment and blaspheming in despair; every now and then large uncovered cars heaped with dead passed by, driven by unfortunate Moorish prisoners condemned to this dangerous office, who by their costume, dark complexions, and reprobated faith, accumulated horrors on the existing misery. To all this was added the continual recurrence of popular commotions, of infuriate mobs running through the streets and imprecating curses on their rulers; for an opinion had

gained ground among these poor ignorant wretches, that the malady did not proceed from Heaven, but from the infernal contrivances of the Spaniards, who had employed a number of men to disseminate certain magical powders that produced the plague, and thus revenged themselves on the Neapolitan people for the revolts and disturbances they had lately committed.

These were not scenes congenial to love ; but it is part of that vigorous passion to triumph over circumstances. Besides the feeling consolations which Filipetto offered with so much eloquence, and which the Marchesa received with tears that relieved her agitated bosom, the precariousness of their own fate, and their mutual apprehensions and hopes, made them lengthen these interviews, and it was only when the hands had waved from the lips in melancholy adieu, that they felt all the horrors of their situation.

Some time had passed in this manner, when one day the Marchesina appeared not at the accustomed balcony. The Count's heart was racked with apprehensions. Another day elapsed, and another—yet she appeared not ; and all that time sleep visited not the agonized lover, who could scarcely be prevailed upon to take the scanty sustenance necessary to support life, or to leave the window for a moment. He stood there, even during the scorching sun of mid-day, hoping at least to attract the attention of some one within his mistress's house ; but his long watching and his piercing cries were of no avail, her habitation seemed deserted, and he could never see either window or door open. It was now the fourth day of this suffering, and the evening hour, for the church bells of the city were sounding the Ave Maria ; he was leaning over the balcony, almost attenuated by anguish and want of nourishment and repose, when the sharp ring of the sacrament bells was heard at a short distance ; those death-boding sounds were then so familiar to the ear that they passed almost unnoticed ; Filipetto, however, started when he saw the procession, with burning wax torches, turn the corner of his street—it advanced, and stopped at the portal of the Marchesina's palace ! The unhappy youth sickened ; the flames of torches, multiplied to infinity, flashed on his distracted eye ; he saw, as through an atmosphere of fire,

that the heavy gates rolled back on their hinges, that the priest, carrying the mystical bread, entered, and he heard the hand-bells that accompanied him cease ringing, and the mournful chant of voices rise within. Conviction flashed upon his mind. "Amalia is dying," said he. "I know it must be she!" A violent convulsion shook him, and he fell to the floor. He was found by his attendant, lifeless and writhed, like a man that had died in horror. Being carried to his couch, he revived, but the minute that followed his revival he flew into frantic madness.

The task imposed on his family for several days was indeed hard and cruel; his shrieks, his raving, his despair, were heart-rending: at length his frenzy sank like a fire that lacks fuel; his physical strength was exhausted, and he remained motionless without opening either eyes or lips. One morning, after nearly a month had passed, and his family despaired of his return to health or reason, he called his favourite valet as he saw him entering the chamber, and desired him to bring a little box that was on his toilette. The man expressing his joy at hearing his master speak again in his usual manner, obeyed the order. Filippetto took a miniature portrait of the Marchesina from the box, gazed at it for a long time, then kissed it, and hung it round his neck: he afterwards read some letters, folded them again, and put them in the box, which he returned to his servant. The poor man, overjoyed, immediately informed him that the Marchesina was not dead; that she had had the plague, but had miraculously recovered. Filippetto was bewildered, and it was not until Giacometto had repeated his words three or four times, that he took in their meaning with precision: when, however, he comprehended and credited the fact, he remained a few minutes in reflective silence, after which, by the help of the valet, he arose from his bed and walked about the room, asking a number of questions in a hurried but rational manner. The happy news of the recovery of the young Count ran through the palace, and his chamber was soon crowded with his parents, his relations, and the domestics of the house, who all hurried to felicitate with him in tenderness and jubilee of heart. To all these effusions of affection Filippetto replied but



little ; indeed, he seemed almost unconscious of the greater part, and wrapped up in some absorbing reflection.

The following morning, in spite of the noisy opposition of his family, he rose and dressed himself with more than ordinary care. After he had written for a few minutes, he despatched Giacometto to do something that would occupy him for a certain time ; and then securing the door of his apartment, he hastened to carry into effect a determination he had made almost as soon as he had ascertained the existence of the Marchesina. He took the covering from the bed, and some strong silk curtains from the windows, and, tying these together, formed a line sufficiently long to reach the ground ; he fastened it to the railing of the balcony, and by its means with great danger and difficulty, he descended to the street, which, like most streets in Naples then, was silent and empty. He ran across the way without losing a moment, and knocked loudly at the Marchesa's palace. A porter he had never seen before, and to whom he was unknown, slowly opened to him ; Filipetto paused not to answer his queries, but, rushing by him, crossed the courtyard, and ascended the marble stairs. In the great hall, that used to be crowded with attendants, he met not a soul ; through the long suite of apartments he traversed, the same solitude and abandonment reigned ; it seemed as though he were pacing the mansions of the dead, and the noise of the heavy doors as they closed after him, sounded like peals of thunder in a catacomb. He reached the apartments of the Marchesa ; he passed her ante-chamber, her saloon, her sitting-room, and entered her boudoir, but still he met nobody. Here lay her lute, which, as the door folded, uttered a sad tone that made him start ; there were books of music, an embroidering frame, and her long black veil ; her slender bodice, her rose-coloured slippers, and other articles of dress, scattered in disorder, apparently as she had left them. A little dog, that lay on a cushion, rose and dragged itself to his feet, and looked supplicatingly in his face :—it was Amalia's favourite, but so reduced and miserable that he scarcely knew it. At the door of her bedchamber he heard the low murmur of voices, as if in prayer :—his was not a situation for pause and reflection—

nobody appeared, he lifted the latch, and entered abruptly. What a scene presented itself to his eyes ! The young, the brilliant Marchesa was reclining in a *fauteuil*, and, at the first glance, presented rather the appearance of a dead woman, or of a wax effigy, than that of a living being : disease had reduced her to a shadow, but had not been able to annihilate her charms ; or rather, for her luxuriant loveliness, it had substituted a beauty more pure, more holy. She was dressed in the sombre weeds of penitence and abnegation : a coarse black serge robe, trimmed with white crape at the bosom and sleeves, and down the front, wrapped closely her tall ethereal figure ; her fine, small feet were bare, and supported on a black velvet cushion ; her thin lily hands were crossed over her breast ; her long raven hair, parted over her ivory brow, fell down her neck, and was brought forward over her shoulders and bosom. On either side of her was a starch Dominican monk, in the black and white dress of the order ; an old female attendant behind supported her head ; opposite to her was an image of the *Madonna adolorata*, with the seven daggers, emblematical of the seven mortal pains of the mother of Jesus, stuck in her heart ; and at the back of the room was a large crucifix, the tortured figure on which was as appalling a one as was ever used to extort penitence from an obdurate sinner. The light of day was excluded, and the wax tapers that burned before the Madonna and the crucifix, cast a pale yellow sickly illumination through the chamber : the most powerful exterior circumstances that monkish zeal and ingenuity could devise for producing an effect, were accumulated in the scene ; and even a firm heart, and one not interested in the principal figure, could not have beheld it without emotion.\*

Filipetto's heart died within him at once, though he could not observe the details of the horrid show. The Marchesa's eye caught the form of the intruder ; a faint scream escaped her, and she sank back deprived of sense. He fell on his knees before her ; he

\* All this is an unexaggerated description of a scene the writer of this tale witnessed in a noble Neapolitan house.

seized her clayey hands ; he kissed them convulsively, and supplicated her to speak to her adorer. One of the monks, as if there had been sacrilege in the act and words of the distracted youth, rose impetuously from his seat, and told him, in a voice of authority, to retire. "Why hast thou forced thyself here, frantic boy?" said he bitterly ; "dost thou want to destroy a being in the bright commencement of her sainted career ? wouldst thou interpose thy mundane passions between her and Heaven ? Begone, and hope not to lead back to the vanities of the world, and to the sins of human affections, one voluntarily devoted henceforth to the purifying retirement of a monastery !"—"A monastery !—a monastery !—my Amalia to a monastery ! my hope, my love, my life !" cried Filipetto, astounded and rising up. He looked at his unwelcome monitor ; he saw the hard features of the monk he had roughly treated at the bull-fight, and he read in them his sentence to despair.

During the progress of the plague, many members of the different monastic orders showed great strength of mind and contempt of danger, in attending the sick and administering the consolations and solemnities of religion to the dying ; to this they were in a certain manner bound by their institutions, and doubtlessly numbers so acted in fulfilment of their duty, and from a genuine Christian spirit ; but seasons of calamity have ever been productive to the extorting hand of the priesthood of a superstitious church, and some there were who braved the risks, flattered by the hope of extending their influence, of securing donations, and of adding wealth and importance to their orders. Motives likes these led the wary Padre Torpietro into the desolated abode of the Marchesa : he attended her father and her brother, and with them his interests fared well, but it was when *she* was seized by the plague that he secured a prize indeed, by inducing her to bequeath a large estate of her property to the church. Contrary to all expectation, her constitution triumphed over her disorder, and this opened a still wider field to the crafty, insatiable Torpietro. That a person could recover from the plague otherwise than by a miracle, was impossible ! The Marchesa had been preserved by a peculiar exertion of divine

favour, which had been conciliated by her devotion and liberality, and the prayers of the Holy Church. This of course prescribed the line of her future conduct ; her devotion was unremitting, and new donations were poured into Torpietro's lap, which encouraged him to attempt a still more considerable and glorious acquisition. Everything seemed to promise him success : Amalia was sunk beneath the weight of sorrow ; she had been educated in the monastery of Santa Chiara ; she was blinded by the superstition of the age and country, and prepared by her recent danger, her present fears and weakness, to take almost any course pointed out by devotion. Torpietro proposed to her to renounce the world, to resign her wealth, and to dedicate to Heaven a life saved by its mercy. Her love for Filipetto was the only obstacle to the Monk's designs, but this retained the poor fanatic with a firm grasp ; and for him she hesitated to enter upon a path, to which she felt her duty call her, and which, she was convinced, would lead her by a flowery way to eternal bliss. When the persevering Torpietro discovered this hindrance, he bound himself up in firm determination, and what he had before proposed, he vowed to enforce and insist on with all his might, with all the arms that credulity, superstition, and terror furnished ; for he had buried in his bosom the trifling insult he had received from the young Count, and he now saw an opportunity of satisfying his revenge and ambition with the same blow. So successful were the machinations of the Monk and an auxiliary he called in, that she was led by degrees to look upon her passion as a crime ; to believe she had been miraculously saved for the express purpose of devoting herself to the service of Heaven ; and finally, solemnly to pledge her word to embrace the monastic life. This promise had been secured two days before the appearance of Filipetto ; his presence would probably have withheld her from the rash engagement ; and even now, the monks feared he might have power enough over the heart of his mistress to induce her to recant. Torpietro endeavoured to make him retire from the chamber before Amalia should recover : "Go hence, young man," said he, "your presence here can only be injurious to the Marchesa and to yourself ; you see to

what a state your madness has reduced her ; away, and trouble her no longer—go, and in prayers and humility of heart resign yourself to the will of the Almighty ; for the woman before you can no longer have anything in common with you : she is affianced to Christ.”—“It cannot be, false monk !” said Filipetto ; “it cannot be ! a prior engagement, sanctioned by long affection, and by the approving voice of Heaven, gives her to me !” “A prior engagement !” retorted the Dominican ; “a human engagement, a futile thing, the sport of every caprice, of every breath of wind ; originating in the fervour of young blood, of human passions, of lust and enjoyment, vanity and sin, must not be opposed—no, not for one instant opposed—to a sacred devotion, an endless love inspired by Heaven ! The pretension is sacrilegious, and will draw down curses on your head. Oh, away ! and trouble not a heart that by the particular exertions of divine care has been estranged from such vanities, and for ever !”—“I cannot, I will not credit your words,” said Filipetto, “and I will not away ! No ! I will recall the past to my Amalia ; I will paint her my sufferings and despair, and I know she will not abandon me.” “Rash, vicious boy !” exclaimed Torpietro, his eyes glistening fire ; “and you dare call in doubt the words of the minister of the Lord ; you dare struggle with your sinful passions and desires against the will of the Omnipotent ! Why do the thunderbolts of divine vengeance sleep ! But by the sanctity of the altar I serve you shall do nought of this : and though all unused to strife and turmoil, the hands of myself and brother shall thrust you hence.” The offended, haughty spirit of the young noble bounded within him ; he laid his hand to his sword : “Vile wretch ! and you threaten violence to one of my house ? If you were not protected by the calling which you disgrace by pursuing the worst of passions—for I remember now the day of the festival, and your offended pride—by my honour ! I would drive your low-born soul from your body !”—“Oh, mother of God !” uttered the Marchesa, who had been slowly recovering, what is it I hear ? Oh, Filipetto, desist and leave me, for we must not meet as in times past : we must never meet again—the rest of my days are devoted to Heaven. I will pray for you, Filipetto, but prayers and tears are all I can

henceforth give you." The young Count rushed to her side, and embraced that form, wont to repose in his encircling arms with delicious trepidation, but that now struggled from them as from the grasp of incest or sacrilege. "My Amalia, my life ! what say you ? do you not remember our plighted troth ?—our long nourished and virtuous passion ? Is it possible that you can have determined to leave me to perish in hopeless anguish ?"—"Before the sanctity of subsequent engagements, those of past weaknesses are dissipated, as the shades of night before the rising sun," said Torpietro. "Before the sanctity of subsequent engagements, those of past weaknesses are dissipated as the shades of night before the rising sun," reiterated the Marchesa, repeating the Monk's apophthegm, word for word ; and it was thus, by making their charges echo without examination their sapient opinions and dogmas, that the men of the cowl and *sottana* instructed them how to comport themselves in this world, and to merit the next. "But," replied the Count, "nothing can break the bond of two hearts ; nothing can annihilate the fervent vows that have escaped our lips ; nothing can justify your abandoning me to the horrors of baulked affection and to maddening despair. I cannot live without you, Amalia ! and when you imprison yourself in a monastery, you open me a tomb to which I shall descend with execration !" "Oh impiety ! oh horror !" cried the monks together. "Oh impiety ! oh horror !" repeated the Marchesa ; but the impassioned pleading of her lover had penetrated deep into her heart, and an agonizing struggle had already commenced between her ancient passion and the overwrought devotion and appalling superstition that had lately been forced upon her. She no longer weakly struggled in his arms, but reposed her drooping head upon his breast ; she tried to speak calmly : "Filipetto, you too have had the plague ; you are sadly changed ; you are yet ill—oh, why did you come here ?" "No," returned he, "I have not had the disease ; my father's precautions have been availing . our house has been saved—but I have been ill, mad, in the horrors of the accursed—and all for you !" "Oh mercy !" cried the Marchesa, recovering a surprising degree of energy : "what have you done ? the infection may still linger about

me—yes, you will take it, and I shall be your murderer.” “Be it even so,” said the Count, embracing her still closer, and holding her pale lips to his; “let me here drink in death; ’twill be sweeter thus than when dealt by your abandoning me! Oh, Amalia! if you knew what I have suffered, if you knew the anguish that has burnt up my heart and maddened my brain, if you knew the immensity of my love, even in the midst of my despair, not the instant promise of a saintly crown in Heaven would lure you from my arms!” “You blaspheme!” exclaimed Torpietro, “you profane the plighted spouse of Christ; you are provoking the tardy but dreadful vengeance of Heaven, and exposing yourself to the wrath and punishment of God’s insulted ministry. Beware! And you, daughter, what is it you do? you fill my soul with horror and dread. I see the blessed Mother of God there before you, writhing as though another poniard were thrust in her lacerated breast; I see your Redeemer there, struggling on the cross as though tortured by a pang more cruel than all his persecutors could devise. A flaming gulf opens beneath your feet, myriads of demons laugh aloud, as they run to prepare torments for an apostate soul! Ha! ha! I cannot look, I cannot think, join me in prayer!” The Marchesa shrieked with affright, and falling on her knees, united her fervent prayers with the monks’; and though the Count’s mind was of a stronger temper, he too shuddered. When the praying ended, the Marchesa mildly, but firmly, insisted that Filipetto should retire; he went slowly out of the room, reproaching her with his looks, and with a heart much sadder than when he entered: Torpietro’s companion followed him. The Count, on reaching the sitting-room, threw himself on a sofa; the monk, who thought to accompany him to the street-door, soon took the liberty of asking him when he meant to go home; to this Filipetto replied, that he did not intend to leave that house; that, moreover, he could not go home, as he knew his father would not expose the safety of all the rest of the family by admitting him, just come from a person that had lately had the plague. This determination, when carried to Torpietro, excited his uneasiness extremely; he dreaded, and with

reason, the repetition of such interviews as that which had just passed; and he proposed to the lady to have her lover forcibly conveyed to his monastery, and confined in a cell until the plague should end; or, at least, until she should be out of the reach of his persecutions. This proposal, however well glossed over, she rejected, and with such warmth that he perceived it would be too full of risk to attempt anything against the Count; he could not even make her promise to shut herself up and see him no more; she also feared her weakness, but could not determine to leave him in unmitigated despair. The wily monks once more recurred to the fearful horrors of superstition; and having, as they thought, created a powerful antidote to her natural impulses and womanly feelings, they left her for a few hours.

The sad ruminations of Filipetto, or rather his stupefaction, had in the meantime, been disturbed by an old favourite domestic of the house. Onofrio started on seeing the Count fixed like a statue in his mistress's room; and after condoling with him, and wondering how he got there, told him that his family was crying for him in the greatest alarm from the opposite balconies. "Tell them," cried he wildly, "that I am here, and that they need take no care for me." The bewildered servant did his behest, and returned after some time with two of his companions. Filipetto did not observe them; he continued motionless and silent, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his countenance expressing the full extent of mortal anguish. "Ah! Signor Conte," said Onofrio, "woeful days are these! the good old Prince is gone, and the Principino too, and my mistress Donna Amalia——" "Donna Amalia! what of Amalia?" cried Filipetto, turning his eyes wildly on the old man. "Alas! Signor, she will leave us! when the plague spared her, I did not think we should so soon lose her; it is true she will become a saint, but it will be a sorrowful day for me, and for us all, when she abandons us." "A sorrowful day indeed," said the Count bitterly; and then falling into fury, added, "But that day shall not arrive! she is my love, my affianced bride; I will assert my rights, I will—against earth and Heaven!" "But her vow cannot be retracted," said Onofrio. "It would be



in piety to attempt it," said another of the servants. "A miracle has saved her," said the other, "and her eternal welfare requires the sacrifice she has made." "Ah! yes, Signor Count," continued Onofrio, weeping, "she must leave us. I did not expect this, and it is cutting; I thought I should serve your Excellencies until my death, and see you happy together, and nurse your children on my knee; but the will of God and of the church be done; now we may all go and be miserable; I shall be left upon the world in my old days. She was certainly the sweetest, dearest lady! she could make all near her so happy, alas! alas! But she will be a saint, I'm sure, and that's something." Filipetto groaned with anguish, and the old man continued his lamentations in such a manner as almost maddened his auditor.

When the Dominicans passed through the room, Torpietro paused awhile, and gazed with satisfaction on his victim; a flash of exultation passed over his harsh countenance; the submissive domestics kissed his hand and asked his benediction: he pronounced the words of Christian charity, and went away with the passions of a fiend revelling in his heart.

After a while the Count endeavoured to gain admittance to the chamber; the Marchesa denied him this, and he passed several hours alone, a prey to the bitterest feelings. In the afternoon the monks returned, and shut themselves up with the Marchesa for a long time; when they left her, the Count renewed his endeavours, and she, unable to resist his supplications longer, at last admitted him. The scene that followed was heart-rending, and an eternal reproach to the spirit that had brought about such a crisis: the unhappy youth again, with burning energy, pleaded the cause of his love; he painted his despair in such ghastly colours that Amalia forgot herself in him; he vanquished all her objections, he surmounted all her difficulties, and intimated that, with her wealth and influence, it would not be difficult to obtain the Pope's dispensation for the vow she had made. Nature and affection were getting the mastery in her heart, when, during a pause, the terrors of apostasy which Torpietro had awakened, rushed full into her mind; and then too she remembered that the wealth Filipetto spoke of was no longer hers—and perhaps this latter

earthly consideration, amidst all her excited spirituality, was not without force in chaining her to the funereal car in which she had embarked her fate.

The deep, inexhaustible stream of human feelings is not, however, to be dried up ; its course is not to be stopped by the dikes of artificial prejudices : as the water, in spite of hindrances, finds its way from the mountain to the plain, so will that stream force its way to its lawful domain—the heart, and range through it uncontrolled. Even while Amalia insisted on the necessity of fulfilling her vow, and on the iniquity of holding such converse with him, tears and sighs accompanied every word : he made her lose sight of the glorious goal to which she was hastening, and the certitude of his despair outdid the terrors of the perdition she was running the hazard of incurring. This sad intercourse lasted far into the night, and did not terminate until they were both quite exhausted. The hours they spent on their uneasy couches were dreadful : during the short slumbers of the Marchesa, visions, originating in her love and fear, presented her the most distressing scenes : now she was with the Count in a splendid hall on her marriage night, revelling in bliss ; anon the hall was transformed into a fiery cavern, and the friendly company into hideous fiends : now she found herself in the lofty monastic choir, hymning with her sister nuns, and elevated by devotion to Heaven ; and then, the picture changing, showed her her lover, in rage and despair, raising his hand against his own life. When she awoke from these convulsive dreams, she was but little relieved, for her cruel fate, the clashing division in her heart, racked her with anguish ; the aspect of her lofty, sombre apartment, the illuminated, distressing images of the Madonna adorata and the crucifix, aggravated her susceptibility and distracted her anew with terrors. Torpietro and his colleagues, returning in the morning, found her in an appalling condition. The penetrating Monk saw in a moment the effects of the interview of the preceding evening, and collected all his force to counteract them. After a long combat he finally triumphed over the superstitious and enfeebled young creature, and even engaged her to retire secretly that very night, to a small lodging he would secure in the house of a priest adjoining Santa Chiara,

where she might remain undisturbed until the doors of the nunnery could be opened for her; he also undertook to prepare in silence the few other things necessary for her removal.

Amalia reserved her last interview with Filipetto till the evening; she prepared herself for it by conjuring up all the dark sophistry of her spiritual teachers, by summoning up all the fearful demons of monkish superstition, by covering herself with potent relics, by praying, and by beating her beautiful unoffending bosom. When the moment came, she had indeed need of supernatural strength; her lover appeared before her in the most affecting guise that one human being could present to another; he renewed his entreaties, and he added reproaches that showed the distraction of his mind;—her heart wavered, but in an instant of firmness she dismissed him. But when she saw his dejected figure retiring slowly through the door of her room, and looking at her reproachingly, her resolution sank again; the thought too of its being the last time she should ever speak to him, occurred to her with fearful might, and she beckoned him to return. “Filipetto—do—oh! do not leave me in anger!” said she. “Heaven knows my affliction is already immeasurable—you surely would not add to it!..... Forget me! forget that I have ever existed; but ah, no, do not so!—you cannot do so.—Pray for me—pray for me!—perhaps—oh! my heart, my heart!” She arose from her arm-chair, she stood trembling, she endeavoured to speak, but could give utterance to nothing but a murmur, indistinct and awful—a torrent of bitter tears flowed down her beautiful face—she grasped her lover’s hand, she staggered, and fell within his arms. Filipetto’s reason abandoned him; he embraced her, he strained her to his heart; he pressed burning kisses on her lips, her neck, her bosom, and drank her tears as they fell. Amalia’s brain reeled; the prospect of perdition disappeared, the voice of an outraged Deity was heard no more, and she partook in the mad passion of her adorer; her heart beat against his, her arms embraced his neck, and she poured the breath of her very soul to his lips. A tremendous flash awoke her from this perilous intoxication; she released herself from Filipetto’s grasp, and bade him again retire. As soon as he disappeared, she rushed wildly to the large crucifix, and laced her arms around the

image, as though it alone could protect her from the passions of her heart. In this state she was found late in the evening by the monks, who came to take her away. When Torpietro raised her up and told her all was ready, she gazed round the room in a vacant manner for some moments, and then said she too was ready : the monks almost carried her through the house and down a private staircase ; she was then lifted into a carriage, Torpietro and the old woman accompanied her, and mute and stupefied she drove from the mansion of her fathers, never to return.

The following morning the unhappy Count learned the disappearance of the Marchesa, and was near falling into a new fit of madness. Nobody in the house could tell him where she had gone to, for no one had been entrusted with the secret, except the old woman at the moment she went away ; to obtain this information he rushed from the palace in search of Torpietro, against whom he raged with hate. Unfortunately, he met the Monk in a street near his monastery ; he arrested him violently by the arm, and demanded where he had inveigled his bride ? The Monk, whose hate was even more deep and deadly than his own, and that was now roused by this rough treatment and affronting insinuation, equivocated the question maliciously ; the young noble was transported, and grasping him by the throat, exclaimed, " Fiend of hell ! tell me where you have placed my love, or, by my soul ! I will trample you to dust beneath my feet !" Torpietro cried aloud with pain and fear ; a number of low wretches, all eager to protect a man of God, immediately ran to his assistance, and the Count would have suffered indignities from their zeal, if at that moment a patrol of soldiers, commanded by an officer who knew his family, had not approached. This officer rescued him from the effects of popular fury, and extorted an answer from the Monk.

" The Marchesa," said he, " has taken refuge from the persecutions of that impious man in a religious retirement, until the cessation of the present calamity permits the holy house of Santa Chiara to receive her in its sisterhood."

" But where is she ? What retirement do you speak of ?"

" That I am solemnly bound not to disclose—to ask me is useless ; all your ruffian violence cannot force that from me. Let

me retire. You have basely injured me, young man ; you have wronged my holy order with your violence and contumely ; but I forgive you, and go to supplicate Heaven to forgive you also !”

So saying, Torpietro walked on amidst the applause of a bigoted multitude, that shouted curses after the hapless Filippetto, who then wandered through the depopulated streets of the capital, without plan or object. At nightfall, panting and exhausted, like a man that had been chased by a fearful enemy, he returned to the Marchesa’s palace, where the kind-hearted Onofrio with difficulty prevailed upon him to take a little sustenance and repose. It would be too long and too sad a detail to enter into all the sufferings and frenzy of the unfortunate young man : part of the day and night he paced, with a despairing mind, through the vast splendid apartments in which he had spent such blissful moments ; he would sit at times for hours before a full-length portrait of the Marchesa, weeping and expostulating to the beautiful shadow ; and then, driven by the vehemence of his feelings, he would run out of doors, and seek to relieve his bound-up heart by open air and rapid motion. In these wanderings, his eye was continually attracted by objects the most afflicting and the most horrid, which acted on him with the power of fascination. He would pause in the squares where piles of dead bodies were burning, (for the most simple sepulture was now accorded only to the rich and great,) and with folded arms, intently watch the flames consuming the miserable remains of mortality : he would follow the funeral procession, and see the body hurled into the dark vault ; and he more than once forced himself into the extensive catacombs without the city, in the gloomy recesses of which thousands of bodies lay heaped up indiscriminately. Although with all this he did not contract disease and die, as he wished, yet he almost entirely alienated his mind, and reduced himself to a pitiable state of moral and physical weakness.

At length, when the city of Naples was almost depopulated, and, with most of her provinces, reduced to a cemetery, the expiatory hermitage of Suor Orsola was completed about the end of August, at which season the sultry temperature of the air is, in this country, generally cooled by torrents of rain. It happened

this year as usual : the air was consequently freshened ; the corruption and filth of the city were washed away ; no new case of the plague occurred, and many who had the infection at the time recovered :—here was the accomplishment of Suor Orsola's prophecy ; and the Neapolitans acknowledged with grateful hearts, that the city was saved by her advice and their devotion !\*

As soon as the council of health and public safety declared that the malady no longer existed, the Count's prudent father opened his door to his unhappy son ; and, with the rest of his family, and with his friends, endeavoured to draw him from the dreadful state into which he had fallen, and watched over him with an attentive and fearing eye. The equally hapless Marchesa was in the meanwhile received within the cloisters of Santa Chiara ; where, still feeling the force of her reprobated passion, dreading the effects of delay, and influenced by her spiritual friends, she hastened to bind herself with an indissoluble tie. A dispensation was obtained to abbreviate her noviciate ; everything was rapidly disposed, and the fatal moment fixed on which she should take the veil.

That day arrived : all Naples resounded with the report ; it reached the ears of the Count, and he contrived to elude the vigilance of his guards, and to enter Santa Chiara before the ceremony began. In making his way along the aisle he met Torpietro ; the Monk fixed his leaden eyes on him ; an expression of triumph quivered over his hard features ; but Filippetto passed on, for there was not enough energy in his heart for hate or revenge. To be near the spot where the sacrifice of his happiness was to be completed, and at the same time to escape observation, he stationed himself in a dark corner of the church, (beneath the gothic tomb of an Anjou Queen of Naples, a culpable, but a beautiful and unfortunate woman,) a little to the right of the high altar. Presently, the spacious body of the church began to fill with spectators ; ranges of elevated seats, covered with costly silk,

\* The monastery of Suor Orsola is to this day one of the most remarkable buildings on the hill of St. Elmo. Its dark, massive walls are seen towering far above the Toledo. From the portal of the monastery there is one of the finest views of the city and bay.

were occupied by the viceregal court and persons of distinction ; and many a fair dame, and many a gallant cavalier, sat there in intense mute interest, to see the being who had been an object of jealousy and of rivalry, of admiration and of love, renounce the world she adorned, and the lover she adored, in the bright spring of her charms. Anon, the peals of the organ resounded within the lofty walls, and the soft voices of the nuns poured from the gilt lattices above : the *missa cantata* was performed with extraordinary magnificence and effect ; a rosy cardinal preached a sermon on the virtues and felicity of a monastic life ; and then, while music pealed around, and the air was charged with incense, the lovely Marchesa, dressed in the splendour that befitted her rank, advanced with downcast eyes and faltering steps, between two old nuns.

With what feelings did he, who lived in her, see her again, in such a situation, and for the last time ! How did he strain his eyes on that beautiful face, and on that agitated, exquisite form ! There was nothing definite in what he felt, as the ceremony proceeded ; his heart lay deep and cold, as if buried beneath a mountain of ice ; his figure was drawn up to the tensity of paralysis, and large, cold drops of moisture descended from his forehead. But when he saw the barbarous scissors cut off her luxuriant hair ; when he saw the long black crape veil, and heard her faintly muttering the vow, a deep groan of unutterable anguish escaped him, and he rushed from the church.

The Count's consciousness of existence finished at that moment—the few remaining months he breathed upon the earth had little of life in them ; his reason was gone, and his heart was broken within him—his death was, therefore, a boon to his afflicted friends and a release for the sufferer.

THE END.







